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THROUGH REALMS OF SONG

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BY
ISAAC BASSETT CHOATE

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THROUGH REALMS OF SONG

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WE twain have ventured on a journey long,
Myself and idle Fancy—neither wise—
Into a land o'erspread by morning skies,
A land but little known unto the throng;
Thither alone have we two hied along
The quiet path, invisible, that lies
Close by those streams that border Paradise—
Fair path that led us on through realms of song.

And now, returning thence, our fingers hold
Stray leaves picked up along our lonely ways,
Our ears are filled with music we have heard.
Perchance these crumpled, faded leaves, unrolled,
May show faint tracings to another's gaze—
Some half-remembered, half-forgotten word.

BETWEEN THE LINES

I WONDER if at any time there will
A reader come to turn these pages so
That he may take the pains to con and know
What sentiments of kindly Nature fill
These limping lines, and having, too, the skill
To read between them all that lies below
Their even surface, in whose mirror show
Only the pictures traced by senseless quill.

And then meseems it as in prison cold
One looks through slit in stone, through iron rods,
He sees how fair and warm the summer shines;
And so, perchance, some reader may behold
How fair a fancy 'tis that smiles, and nods,
And beckons to him here between the lines.

THE SONNET

THE royal oak, alone, without a peer,
Stands in the midst of subjects that surround
In close array, with deference profound,—
In sovereignty it brooks no rival near,
But growing yet more sturdy year by year,
Firm planted and deep rooted in the ground,
With majesty of strength and beauty crowned,
Unchallenged holds its gracious presence here.

The sonnet has a province all its own,
Maintains no retinue of courtiers nigh,
Keeps in domain of letters honored place;
To every cultured language is it known
For feelings that are deep, thoughts that are high,
Yielding a form of stateliness and grace.

POESY

MEN have in all times had their sacred shrine
On lofty hill, a space of holy ground,
Some spot with awful reverence compassed round,
Within the silence of o'ershadowing pine;
There have they sacrificed to powers divine,
The flaming altar with their gifts have crowned
And then have blaze of burning incense drowned
In copious libations poured of wine.

But Poesy, companion close of Art,
Has ever dwelt within the vale below,
Beside the waters of clear flowing springs;
There with her sister Graces lives apart,
With soothing voice she charms a world of woe
And to the heart of man she sweetly sings.

THE POET

HE touched a chord that had been slumbering long,
He waked an echo from its dreamless sleep
And gave to an ungracious world to keep
The sweet enchantment of his idle song.
His life was lost amid the busy throng
Whose hearts and souls are all intent to reap
Full profit of their toiling,—on the deep
As on the stable land their lives belong.

And yet the poet played his humble part,
Gave to the gainful task a keener zest,
Fed lamps that in life's sanctuary burn;
He found the highest motive in his art,
Strove with all effort to attain the best,
Nor asked he any guerdon in return.

THE IDLER

A CARELESS saunterer, he meditates,
While strolling idly crowded streets along
With pace unmeasured, measure of a song
Which to the praise of Love he dedicates;
And as to his impassioned thought he mates
Words that shall do its tenderness no wrong,
The poet soon is lost amid the throng
That hurries on and for him never waits.

But when the day is ended with its care,
With all its tasks that have been worried through,
Its hours been bartered for a meager pay,
Perchance some tired soul will be aware
There was a pensive man whom no one knew,
Yet kinsman of them all, in town today.

TRUTH AND BEAUTY

A REALM of mystery to all beside
Those who have been endowed with vision clear,
With quick and keen perception of the seer,
Who finds that truth and beauty are allied,
That, each to other faithful, they abide;
And those who have the finely practised ear
In Nature's voice a harmony will hear
Which to our duller senses is denied.

That mystery avails to lure the bold
Adventurer beyond the hither shore
In search of what to him is fresh and new;
A bright *mirage* it is with charm to hold
In spell of deep enchantment; evermore
He dwells with what is beautiful and true.

OLD-TIME SONG

A YOUNG voice goes on singing all day long
  Light airs melodious in this crowded street,
  Amid loud roar of traffic, tramp of feet,
Mad rush and medley of fast-hurrying throng;
A young voice singing ever clear and strong
  In tones of innocence divinely sweet
  Is heard in measured music to repeat
Unstudied cadences of old-time song.

Is it that feelings are no longer stirred,
  That memories are not wakened by the voice
    Which over all this din and tumult rings?
Are those rich melodies no longer heard
  That once moved souls to sorrow and rejoice,
    To be uplifted as on angel wings?

THE SINGING ROBE

"WHO wears a singing robe is richly dight,"
Its loosened folds in rhythmic measure flow
Adown his form—his graceful figure show
In happy blending of the dark and light,
The silk in purple with the ermine white,
That drape in harmonies the pain and woe
With joy of triumph over fallen foe;
The sweet succession of life's day and night.

He need not wear the heavy crown of kings
Nor need he yet a royal scepter bear
To prove he is the sovereign of mind;
The potent spirit of the song he sings
Makes conquest of the human heart, and there
Is poet hailed as noblest of mankind.

CHARM OF MINSTRELSY

THE pagan gods are dead, Pan last of all
To leave the shepherds and their shepherding
On slopes enclosing the Pierian spring,
Muse-haunted, whose clear waters in their fall
Within the woods wake echoes musical
That to the ears of later singers bring
Harmonious numbers of what hymns they sing
When would they celebrate Pan's festival.

Yes, Pan is dead, his altar fires are cold,
All withered are the garlands that were hung
Around those altars at an earlier day;
But yet the charms of minstrelsy still hold
Their magic spell in what today is sung,—
The world delights in some sweet pastoral lay.

POWER OF SONG

A LITTLE hand, that of a little maid
Just starting on her pilgrimages here
And of the future having yet no fear,
Confidingly in my rough palm was laid
While down the narrow grass-grown lane we strayed
To where the mountain-shadowed brooks appear
Running with currents musically clear
As when in childhood on their banks I played.

One hand was soft with finger-tips of rose,
The other, wrinkled parchment written plain
With record of the years marked deep and strong;
But yet the little hand led where it chose,
And at what pace it chose, adown the lane;
Such also is the magic power of song.

GIFT OF SONG

HEAVEN'S almoner, most gracious to bestow
Upon our world the gift of genial light,
Who ranged the ridges of Cyllene's height,
Equipped with quiver and with shining bow,
And foaming wild boar close pursuing, so
With fleet Diana of the moonlit night
Shot his keen arrows of unerring flight
And laid the frightened, panting quarry low.

The loud, sharp twanging of the vibrant string
Rang with a rhythmic sweetness to his ear,
He listened to the cadenced tremor long;
Then did he teach the golden lyre to sing
What were the gods Olympian glad to hear,—
He led the Muses in their rapturous song.

SONG AND REVERIE

THE winds are vocal on this summer's day,
Are tuneful as they come between the hills,
And, keeping pace with idly lapsing rills,
They make a drowsy music on their way,
For they have found thin reeds on which to lay
Their lips in a warm glowing kiss that thrills
Fond heart of Nature—wakes the love that fills
A universe as idle as are they.

So are revived faint passions of the past,
And sweetest memories come back anew
When storied fields of thought and purpose vast
With Song and Reverie are wandered through,
Back to that eastern gateway where at last
A glimpse of Eden flashes into view.

THE OVER-SONG

WE deem it must be somewhat loud and strong,
Some swift, onrushing organ-peal of sound,
Or mighty voice from silences profound
That unto unfrequented shores belong,
Some cry of terror from the stricken throng
Whom Fate has in extremest peril bound
And with unspoken horror hemmed around;—
We deem that this is Nature's over-song.

But if we listen when the waves are still,
When soundly sleeping lies the tired shore,
When chambers of the shell hushed murmurs fill,
A half-forgotten measure pondered o'er,
Then laughing waters of a tinkling rill
Sweet music of that over-song will pour.

ISLES OF SONG

THEY lie in quiet off our morning shore,
But rarely seen just glimmering through the haze
That haunts our coast on all these summer days,
And hangs, a misty shroud, these waters o'er—
Those Isles of Song round which strong currents pour,
Round which the idle ocean fondly plays,
On their warm shelving sands a warm lip lays
Breathing of peacefulness forevermore.

Perhaps the vision of those isles is dim
To those who look for them at night and morn,
And indistinct at best their forms appear,
But their lone site is fully known to him
Who hears far over empty seas forlorn
Their music sounding ever to his ear.

SONG, THE PILGRIM

WHITHER, dear Heart of Song, wouldst hold
thy way?
Over a boundless and uncharted deep,
Or over rugged mountains high and steep
Wouldst thou for us the trails and courses lay?
How hast thou shown a smiling face and gay
Lightheartedness, though needing rest and sleep,
Hast spoken cheerful words while others weep,
And tried to make of life a holiday!

And Song has traversed more than all the earth,
Has never had a chance to rest his feet
Till Pity's self was haply moved to tears;
Yet through it all has kept a voice of mirth,
A cheerful tone with which our hearts to greet,
A youth unfading through fast aging years.

THE CHORUS

YE sweet-voiced singers of the earlier time
That was of Poesy the Golden Age
When Genius set upon the Athenian stage,
Of thought most clear, of language most sublime,
Harmonious with the laws of rhythm and rhyme,
Its masterpieces of instruction sage,
How Fate and human Destiny engage
To prosecute forever Guilt and Crime;—

Ye choral singers singing through the years,
Ay, through the centuries unto this day,
And heard upon this distant western shore;
How happens it this world of ours appears
No wiser than was your world in its way,
That guilt and crime seem nowise less, but
more?

THE CHORAL DANCE

WITH claspèd hands, devoutly circling round
An altar garlanded with myrtle green,
Fair maids in honor of the Cyprian Queen
Weave festal dance, their brows with myrtle crowned;
Their feet unsandalled beat the grassy ground
To music made by rustic Pan, unseen,
Piping two scraggy olive trees between
While lithe limbs register the mystic sound.

Slowly the marble crumbles into dust,
The chiseled lines—so delicate—grow dim,
And flush of joy from maiden cheeks is gone;
But yet those lifelike, graceful figures must
Repeat the modulation of the hymn
As here the happy choral dance goes on.

THE DANCERS

HAIL, blithesome dancers on the village green,
At eventide when in the glowing west
The sun has gone into his tent for rest,
And purple mist is in the vales between;—
Hail, ye glad dancers now as gladly seen
In handiwork of rustic weavers dressed—
Now is the piper playing at his best,
And parents fond are looking on serene!

How has the artist spared no practised skill
To draw your figures to a flowing line,
And from restraint your supple limbs release!
The dance goes on while alien hands now fill
This decorated amphora with wine,
Nor will the piper's music ever cease.

IN THOUGHT

IN thought that overpasses bounds of space,
Nor heeds of time if it be now or then,
That brings within our vision yet again
What in far ages past has taken place;—
In thought along the course of years I trace
What bold adventures have been made by men
To regions that were held mysterious when
The world was new and when was new the race.

Will there be at some distant future date
One sentient being led in thought along
To where this hour his halting-place may be,
And will he tarry here to speculate
What is, perhaps, the magic charm of song
That to its sanctuary beckons me?

NATURE'S THOUGHT

FAR from the noisy, crowded market-place,
Here in the silence of the lonely wood,
Alone with Nature in her solitude,
I search the secret of her thought to trace
In varied forms of leaf and flower that grace
So richly tangled thicket where intrude
But rarely feet of men—to find her mood
Shown in the smiles and tears upon her face.

A sudden strain of music on the ear
Comes with a sense of freedom and of power
Such as to minstrelsy of birds belong;
Then is the mystery of that thought made clear,
For Nature gives the charm of leaf and flower
That she may have the melody of song.

ONE LITTLE THOUGHT

ONE little thought, abiding with me long,
Has been content in friendly heart to stay,
Companion of my dreams, and all the day
At my heart's door singer of happy song;—
One little thought the unskilled Muse would wrong.
Were she to wed this to a common lay,
To lead it forth upon the public way
Where common thoughts on common objects throng.

One little thought but precious all—ah, well!
In vain were my attempt to set it free,
Since in my heart of hearts fain would it dwell
And all of life would fare along with me;
Nay, only this my Muse of it can tell,
That little thought, dear Love, is thought of thee.

ON THE INTERVALE

THEY spring to life beneath the viewless feet
Of breezes wandering up or down between
Two low hill-ranges bordering a green
Expanse of meadow; here a calm retreat
Where fern-clad slope and stream each other greet;
The waters dallying in a mood serene
Reflect the mirrored beauty of the scene,
And all the region is with charm replete.

They spring to life, these waves upon the grass,
These ripples running with them on the stream
As if had land—and water—spirits met;
They beat a rhythmic measure as they pass,
A vision rises as in idle dream,
We hear the music of a canzonet.

AT DAYBREAK

DAY comes with song—brown thrushes in the wood,
Red-breasted robins in close orchard trees
And blackbirds piping merrily with these
Wake each to happiness its sleeping brood;
There is a call of little ones for food,
And over shadowed fields of grass one sees
Barn swallows circling on the wing with ease,
Repeating their short creed that life is good.

Day comes with song that tells of happiness
Among these humble creatures of the air,
Whose grateful hearts in song thus overflow;
Their blended voices raise a hymn to bless
The gracious Hand that gives them constant care,
And makes Heaven's goodness all the greater so.

IMPRISONMENT

WITHIN the prison of its cage confined,
The captive bird sings on as merrily
As when it sang out o'er the meadows—free,
And lavished music on the summer wind;
Now, to this forced imprisonment resigned,
The bird does not abate its melody
But still sings on—heart-glad in memory
Of open skies—these gilded bars behind.

The soul peers out through avenues of sense,
Dim-lighted from fond smile of Heaven above,
On boundless universe of worlds bestowed;
Though burdened with deep longing, most intense,
It wooes with song companionship of Love
And of a dungeon makes a blest abode.

SILENCE

SAY, what is silence? 'Tis a passing thought
Of what is left to us from pleasing sound
For which again are waiting all around,
Repeating that last strain, but hearing naught
Of all the melody the morning brought,
On field and forest lies a spell profound;
The noontide shadow, sleeping on the ground
With hush of summer stillness, guards the spot.

Sometimes upon the crowded street it seems,
Among the many voices that we hear,
There comes to us a long-remembered tone;
And then, as in the vanishing of dreams,
All other shapes and shadows disappear,
And we are left with one dear friend alone.

SILENCE IN MUSIC

A SHARE in music silence has with sound,
The flow of melody runs as a rill
Runs noisily adown the sloping hill,—
Sometimes in laughter as with sunshine crowned,
And sometimes idly lingering around
Deep pools which overhanging willows fill
With shadows; there the somber waters still
Dream of their coursing in a sleep profound.

The current of our feeling runs not long
Without increase or slackening of its force,
From time to time with sweet oblivion blessed,
Not otherwise it must be with our song
That, changing now and then its onward course,
Halts by the willows for a needed rest.

MAGIC REEDS

O REEDS on which the god of shepherds played
While shepherds listened with delight of tears,
Still are ye musical though no one hears
When on your pipes mute lips of Eve are laid,
The delicate sweet harmonies are made,—
Soft melting music coming to our ears;
We're not in mood of shepherds, it appears,
With leaden cares our hearts are overweighed.

Would that our thoughts might let us sit and dream
While Evening hushes discords of the day
And slowly draws thick curtains of the night;
Then might we hear soft lapsing of the stream,
Hear you, O reeds, upon its margin say,
"We drink that music with how deep delight!"

NATURE'S HARMONIES

HOW many different voices Earth can raise,
Together chiming varied harmonies
As perfumes, blended, call out eager bees
From busy hives and lead them devious ways
O'er meadow grounds through slumberous summer days;
Aye chiming in sweet unison are these,
Each modulated some fond heart to please,
And all combined to sound their Maker's praise!

In all the music of this vocal throng,
Most subtle magic of enchanting word,
Loud roar of waters as these pour along,
Domestic twittering of home-keeping bird,
In volume grand of Earth's exultant song
Will any feeble note of mine be heard?

THE EMPTY SHELL

AN idle boy, at play upon the shore
Of the mysterious sea, holds to his ear
An empty-chambered shell that he may hear
Repeated from far off the mighty roar
Of billows, long incoming, dashing o'er
Rough, broken ledges rising bold and sheer
Against the ocean's rage, to domineer
Those waters turbulent forevermore.

If he were asked upon what curving strand
Continuously the sounding billows roll,
It were not easy for the boy to tell;
Nor is it easier to understand
How much of that strange rhythm is in his soul,
How little of it echoed from the shell.

THE DRUID

HIS was the priestly office to invoke
Those powers spiritual that intervene
Betwixt material things and those unseen,
What once were gods for whom did altars smoke;
As if—interpreter divine—he spoke
Explaining what the heavenly portents mean
And what are whispered secrets of the green
Umbrageous leafage of time-hallowed oak.

Today the druid enters in the wood
With other thoughts than those of fear and dread
To meet his own soul's kindred spirit there,
The peaceful quiet of that solitude
Alarms him not—it seems to him instead
The holy silence of unspoken prayer.

ACROSS THE CENTURIES

SOME gentle singer, in an age unknown,
Told in his song a story of distress—
A tale of suffering and of wretchedness,
With touch of human pity in its tone
As if its burden had been his alone;
Those low sad notes have often served to bless
Poor sorrowing hearts with their deep tenderness
Until at length they serve to move mine own.

O sweet-voiced singer of a far-off past,
I know not of what land or tongue thou art,
Yet for thy deep compassion cherished long;
Those loving notes of thine have come at last
To modulate the beating of my heart;—
I greet thee, "Brother!" in the Realm of Song.

BELATED HONORS

CREEP, Ivy, creep in gentlest quietude
Across the poet's tomb, with tendrils green,
Within the shade where drooping willows lean
Above the sleeping dead in mournful mood;
Here, where the poet rests, green ivy should
In close embracing of gray stone be seen
Planted and trained by loving hands that mean
Thus may be shown their lasting gratitude;

For, while he lived, the Muses gave him skill
That waked the lyre to sweetest melody,
And what they taught, their docile pupil learned;
Now that the voice is hushed, the strings are still,
There should be given to his memory
Belated honors that were nobly earned.

RELEASE

THE bird that has been in strict bondage bred,
Has never tasted liberty—how sweet!
Is always ready minstrel to repeat
The song, for singing which it has been fed;
Finds life that is in calm seclusion led
Flow on from day to day with peace replete
As life of anchorite in lone retreat,
Changeless as stars are, stationed overhead.

But let loud singing of the lark be heard,
Outpouring all its heart in ecstacy,
The memory of that song will never cease
To stir to fluttering the captive bird,
To waken native longing to be free,
And turn its song to pleading for release.

IN THE GALLERY

HOW great the gift of genius was his
  Whose rich creative power of thought could trace
  What in the calmness of this lovely face
Repose of marble meditation is!
This look has kept throughout long centuries
  The artist's fond ideal of our race,
  The poet's dream of loveliness and grace
That comes to him in realm of reveries.

This mild expression wins me from before
  Statues of gods, as gods were held of old,
    And groups of mythic heroes, gathered here;
This face of quiet beauty charms me more
  Than in my halting measure can be told;—
    It is as if an angel should appear.

NATURE'S SYMPHONIES

SMALL part, indeed, of Nature's symphonies
Comes to the dull, the inattentive ear
Of him who is indifferent to hear
Sweet song of birds, soft murmuring of bees,
Low whispering of pine tops to the breeze,
Rustling of Autumn's raiment brown and sere,
Bold Winter's challenge ringing loud and clear
To match for music Summer's melodies.

Our own the blame; we fail to cultivate
What faculties were given us at birth
The true to hear, the beautiful to see;
Our thought, to selfish uses dedicate,
Neglects to note the friendliness of Earth
And lacks at last the broadened sympathy.

TRIUMPH OF SONG

THE stone, inscribed, is slowly ground to dust,
High granite walls, laid up by mortal hand,
Will crumble down into coarse desert sand,
Memorial bronze will be consumed by rust;
All work, except that done by Nature, must
Tend to decay; however wisely planned
And strongly built, the structure cannot stand;
To things material we cannot trust.

Only the Spirit builds to outlast time,
For this one purpose using human thought,
Possessing truth that lives through ages long;
With this erects an edifice sublime
On which Fame's noblest eulogies are wrought,
And herein find we triumph grand of Song.

MINSTRELSY UNHEARD

SOUL of my soul, O thou that leadest me
Into the rich and wide domain of Song,
Taking a solitary way along
Some meadow stream that winds down to the sea,
Flooding its reedy banks with melody,
How should I do those gentle spirits wrong
Who to these festivals of Nature throng,
Were I at such a time to sing to thee!

Heart of my heart, here let us rest the while
We listen for that minstrelsy unheard
Except by those who reverently come;
Here now will Nature greet us with a smile,
Nor shall we find occasion for a word;—
In adoration souls devout are dumb.

PAN

WHEN Heaven at first, in all-embracing plan,
Provided means by which the human soul
Should rise through effort to its destined goal,
Attain angelic dignity in man,
Then numbers in harmonious strains began
To rule his steps, his conduct to control—
Round his completed life to perfect whole
Under the kindly tutelage of Pan.

Pan led the winds along bright meadow stream
Whose running waters wakened vocal reeds,
He posted Echo halfway up the hill;
Sang to the sleeping shepherd in his dream
Such music as an upward climbing leads
The Soul Heaven's highest purpose to fulfill.

DEATH OF PAN

OF pagan gods was Pan the last to die,
And when he died, off Parga's rocky shore,
Those sparkling blue Illyrian waters o'er
Came from the hills—long shepherded—the cry,
"Great Pan is dead!" beneath the open sky,
On sunny slopes were shepherd choirs no more
Heard singing choral measures as of yore,
The best of shepherds thus to glorify.

Went out of human life a joy that day
That never will on earth again be known,
Gladness produced by simple harmony,
The heart contented on the hills to stay,
To take the summer beauty as its own
And of the summer sounds make melody.

FAUNS

ONE faun sits piping in the ample shade
By outstretched arms of oak thrown on the ground,
Soothes midday into silence, while around
Stand others hearing music that is made
Upon the vocal reed so fondly played;
Charmed by the simple melody of sound,
Life is their blessing, with delight is crowned—
Exile from Eden being yet delayed.

All this upon the pitcher at the well
To show what happy thought the artist had
When came this vessel from the potter's wheel
He found in this design the means to tell
How little do we need to make us glad
When we for simple art have learned to feel.

THE SILENT MUSE

INTO the august presence of his chief
Strode suddenly Achilles, bluff and rude,
Of temper passionate, in angry mood,
His words, discourteous, were sharp and brief,
Scarce had he given his pent-up wrath relief
When he was conscious close behind him stood
Athena in her peerless maidenhood;
He turned—was silent for his shame and grief.

So are the brave notes of the singer stilled
With realizing he at length has come
The unimpassioned Silent Muse before,
His ardent soul with icy breath is filled,
The lips that have been jubilant are dumb,
And song of his will be heard nevermore.

LAURIGER

OF old the flutist, playing airs divine
In honor of Apollo, went before
The Grecian youth who bough of laurel bore
From Tempe's vale to Delphi's honored shrine,
Due offering to Art's patron and a sign
Of fealty to ancient mythic lore,
Immortal praises of the god that pour
Triumphantly along the Dorian line.

This was a fitting tribute to the powers
That ruled of Greece the highest destinies
And for her fashioned splendid forms of art;
And nobler yet it makes this task of ours,
To lead through brighter meads of song than these
The rhythmic overflowings of the heart.

ANGELS' VISITS

NO longer do men listen well to hear
Angelic voices singing hymns of praise,
Nor do men as in patriarchal days
Expect an angel at their tent appear
When are in dimness blended far and near,
When stars come out with friendly smiling rays
To light the pilgrim on deserted ways,
Late seeking shelter, seeking rest and cheer.

No, we have tried to measure infinite space,
Have sought for sources whence do centuries flow,
Left unobserved small garden of the heart;
So does it happen that we cannot trace
Short paths by which God's angels come and go;
Heaven lying from us so small space apart!

AT WHEEL AND LOOM

INDUSTRIOUSLY the maiden at her wheel
Spins flaxen fibers that are smooth and strong
Into a shining thread where none goes wrong,
The work directed by her fingers' feel,
And when is distaff bare, the twirling reel
Winds off the knotted skein, while all day long
Her work goes to the measure of a song
That tells of lives were noble, hearts were leal.

While busy matron at her weaving plies
Her shuttle as the swallow skims the plain
A rhythmic maze describing in the sun;
We hear the shuttle singing as it flies,
Accompanied by a familiar strain;
The songs of maid and matron are but one.

THE SCROLL

HOW little of man's craftsmanship remains
From times remote, from half-forgotten lands,
That kept employed so many toiling hands
On palaces, strong fortresses and fanes,
King's coffers filling up with hoarded gains!
Now only worn and broken column stands,
All else reduced to loosely-winnowed sands
More widely spreading out bare desert plains.

More is there left to us of ancient thought,
Ethereal fabrics of the poet's mind
And lofty visions of heroic soul;
All these in words of full-toned music brought,
In mellowed sweetness of the years, we find
Inscribed upon this worn and faded scroll.

THE QUIETIST

THE moving lips are mute, the voice is dumb,
No words of prayer in trembling accents rise
On bated breath—unheard the tender sighs
Of adoration and of faith that from
A bosom all of sweet desire come;
All are as silent as those brimming eyes
Within whose depths a heaven reflected lies,
Of peace and joy—of happiness the sum.

It may be that the Quietist, in fond
And deep devotion to the Heavenly Power,
Unto the throne of God comes very near,
Or that some angel, from the world beyond,
Bends over him in this ecstatic hour
And to his unvoiced longing lends an ear.

THE MYSTIC

THE world may vanish; with it every sun
Be blotted out in darkness absolute;
The stars in spheral courses may be mute—
Stars vocal since creation was begun;
The planets with the earth may cease to run,
All motion stop, its forces to recruit
And of its labors gather up the fruit,
And Nature may proclaim her purpose done;

But yet there stands the universe the same
Unto the mystic's gaze as 'twas before,—
That which has vanished empty was and vain
There always will be wherewithal to frame
A universe of light and praise once more
So long as truth and reason shall remain.

SUGGESTION

WHO hears the ringing of the vesper bell
Come over waters from far miles away
And on the silence of the evening lay
Of Sabbath stillness the entrancing spell,
Finds not in mortal speech the power to tell
What mild enchantment of the spirit may
The finer feelings of his being sway,
And cause the sympathetic tears to well.

So near they come, and yet from source how far,
Those thoughts that meet us when at eventide
We walk abroad and deem ourselves alone!
Unconscious of their coming as we are
And startled thus to find them at our side,
We yet see they are kindred to our own.

OUR EXEMPTION

OUR world is one of music and of song;
The rivers in their journeying to the sea
Make, on their downward course, continually
A low, sweet murmur as they rush along;
The winds come from the hills, too, blowing strong
Through pine tops that are stringed for minstrelsy,
With unfelt touches wake to melody
Soul-haunting measures that have slumbered long.

We need but listen, to those notes give heed,
Lend ear unto the voice of flood and wood,
Weave into rhythmic strain the sounds they bring;
Of our own labored work there is no need,
Our tones are harsh, our composition rude,
No reason is there we should try to sing.

GIPSIES

THE gay, light-hearted players to the sun
With singing fill the hours as these pass,
Keep up their ceaseless chirping in the grass,
Ten thousand crickets with the voice of one;
They take no note of when the day is done
More than the sand which, running in the glass,
Marks when an hour of sunshine ends, alas!
And when another cycle is begun.

So passes life beneath the open sky
Among the children of a homeless race
Whose history is not of months and years;
Whose plans and purposes are bounded by
No limits definite of time and place,
But by the light and shade of smiles and tears.

THE PITY

How great the pity any hearts are sad
When so much beauty in the world is found,
The heavens by day and night with splendor crowned;
The woods and orchards all with singing glad,
The sloping fields and meadows richly clad,
Sweet-scented violets springing from the ground;
From smiling scenes and melody around
So much of joy in living to be had!

How great the cheerless pity is that we
Who have unfailing sources of delight
Should make our dwelling in a vale of tears;
Should never lift our eyes above to see
How in the glory of creation bright
Most strangely wonderful our world appears!

MUSIC UNCONDITIONED

THERE would be music though were no one near
To listen to glad singer's merry note
Of joy in living, sung from tuneful throat
Of happy bird whose voice rings loud and clear;
For if there were no human soul to hear
That simple song, repeated as by rote,
There would yet be some faithful heart to dote
Upon the singing of a mate most dear.

Earth has her choir of voices trained to raise
Glad matin song of greeting and of cheer,
Sweet evensong to charm the world to rest;
And were the world to lack these songs of praise,
There would be silence deep in which to hear
Far spheral music, and mankind were blest.

SORROW'S SERVICE

THE workman having forged a shapely blade
And having polished this upon the wheel,
Engraves upon the brightly glittering steel
Some text of honor, pledge of duty made
To king or country, worthy homage paid
At shrine of beauty, where do champions kneel;
Then is the heated sabre made to feel
The chill of waters its slight form invade.

When Heaven has sent a poet soul to dwell
Upon the earth for man's allotted years,
No further grace is left for soul to ask;
But it has been ordained by Heaven as well
That fervid soul should be baptized in tears
To be attempered to its nobler task.

BY THE STREAM

WE watch the river on its seaward course
Sweep round the headland with its current strong,
And at the rocky narrows rush along,
Leap down the ledges with increasing force;
We hear the river's voice from murmuring hoarse
Fall to the gentle cadence of a song
Where with the wind-blown reeds it lingers long;
We see not how it gets back to its source.

Day follows day into remoteness vast
As runs the rapid river to the sea,
They vanish like the vision of a dream;
But when the days of morn and eve are past
Into the measureless eternity,
We then shall know whence issues forth the stream.

WINGÈD WORDS

QUICK words are spoken in reproof of wrong,
Brave words are boldly uttered in debate
Where men are gathered to deliberate,
And where runs party spirit deep and strong;
Words that have lived in hearts of people long,
Made vital with the spirit of the great,
Serenely bearing sentiments of weight,
Or made immortal, woven into song;

Such words with keenness of the Indian's dart,
And feathered with the lightest plumes of wit,
Speed as through storm-cloud flash the lightning flames;
Such words, escaping from the speaker's heart,
Unerring in their flight, are bound to hit
The mark, though far, at which the speaker aims.

INSCRIBED

BESIDE the mighty, onward-flowing Nile
The pyramids in silent mystery stand,
Their thought, in Egypt's lonely waste of sand,
Inscrutable as is of Sphinx the smile,
On sculptured face of most majestic pile
A poet's lines are traced by Roman hand;
Two thousand years have passed in pageant grand,
But yet their tender feeling lives the while.

We know not who designed the pyramid,
Who ordered to their task the Egyptian host,
What secret in its darkened crypt lies hid,
Of what proud deed its pictured chambers boast;
But here in poet's phrase a stranger did
Record his grief for what the heart had lost.

PERSIA'S POET

BENEATH full splendor of the desert skies
That border empty Persian sands around,
Within scant shadow of acacia found
The poet of all doubt and unfaith lies
And dreams a heart-sufficing Paradise;
The cares of life in draughts Lethean drowned,
His wrinkled brow with Bacchic ivy crowned,
He drains his jug of wine Silenus-wise.

So has the World through all the ages tried
To ease the aching heart, the troubled soul,
And deem itself with present pleasures blest;
But when of sorrow comes the whelming tide,
Along the shores of life its billows roll
And sweep that frothy reasoning with the rest.

OMAR KHAYYAM

POET of life, who fortunately found
A little garden in a desert place,
Where grew at hand the Muses' herb-o'-grace,
And only was "the Wilderness" around,
And where of life was heard not any sound
Except the bulbul's notes to interlace
Light tinkling waters in the fountain vase—
A melody with reverent silence crowned!

Thy quaint philosophy we ponder well
And wonder if its scheme we understand,
If its elusive spirit we have caught;
Still do thy softly-cadenced verses tell
To those who read them in an alien land
The life immortal of poetic thought.

THE PAGAN WORLD

THE Pagan World lived nearer to the Source
Of Life than we; it reverently heard
Low whispering pine tops, sweetly singing bird,
Wild winds at play with ocean breakers hoarse,
In fancy followed them upon their course;
With sense of awe the pagan soul was stirred,
In adoration listened for the Word
That should command all elemental Force.

But we today are all intent to find
What power is slumbering on in beds of ore,
To our own use feed sacrificial flame;
We strive avenging wrath of Jove to bind
To menial service, wasting Nature's store,
Regardless from what Hand the bounty came.

ON THE SACRED WAY

OUT from Athena's city, violet-crowned,
Went men and women in procession long
With piping shrill and with melodious song.
Unblemished offerings with fillets bound
Were led in front, and maidens danced around;
Black-bearded priests were mingled with the throng,
Repeating praises as they moved along
The Eleusinian way to holy ground.

And evermore mankind are going forth
Along the sinuous boundaries of time,
Some sacred shrine of worship yet their goal;
They count that day the one of greatest worth
That brings to them a vision more sublime;
Brings into view bright City of the Soul.

HEAD OF APHRODITE

THOUGH mute these lips of marble, yet they speak
What in the lofty artist soul was thought
What time the hand of sculptor fondly wrought
Unfading youth upon that brow and cheek;
No further mystery need any seek
Of sudden rapturous feeling that was caught
For that sweet loveliness by Genius brought
Upon those lips that are divinely Greek.

Ah! would it be some whispered word of love,
Framed to awake delight of mortal ear,
If only power of utterance had been given?
Or would it be some simple strain above
Our unaccustomed sense of sound to hear,
Some missing note kept in reserve for Heaven?

HELLAS

AFAR from us, beyond the ocean wide,
Beyond abode of famed Hesperides,
Bathed by the waters of Ionian seas,
Lies Hellas glittering in translucent tide,
Her storied plains and mountains glorified
In song by her heroic memories
Of valor shown by sons defending these;
By noble sons who for her freedom died.

So is it Hellas lives for us today,
A splendid monument to valor's worth
Wherever man for truth and victory strives;
An inspiration to mankind for aye
While Right must be maintained upon the earth,
And Liberty outvalues human lives.

ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS, the minstrel, by his unmatched skill,
Ruled Hermes' lyre that its chords vibrate
In melody, charm keeper of Hell's gate
To dull forgetfulness of duty, fill
Dim courts of Pluto with his music till
Lord of the dead his rigor should abate,
Allow the singer to reclaim his mate
And let the fond wife follow at her will.

Ah, happy both, had he but kept in mind
The one condition of their blessedness,
And held his gaze toward realms of genial light;
But Love, unthinking, made him look behind
Upon the face that was his life to bless
Only to find it fading out of sight.

EURYDICE

THE saddest page in Love's sad history
Is that which tells how by the magic charm
Of his sweet music Orpheus did disarm
Hell's guardian beast of his ferocity;
And how he came to where Persephone,
With Pluto reigning, trembled in alarm—
By song and lyre he soothed all dread of harm,
Won back to life his lost Eurydice.

By one condition only were they bound,
The pair returning to their native skies;—
He should not turn as he went on before.
With happiness existence would be crowned;—
If they could look into each other's eyes,
Hell were itself a Heaven evermore.

SONG'S HERITAGE

WHEN Orpheus died, was lost the magic skill
That led his hand along the trembling wire,
While this, accordant with the heart's desire,
Rang out responsive to the player's will,
Mute to remain—those tuneful strings—until
Apollo should take up the fallen lyre,
Again its tones with melody inspire,
Again with magic touch its being thrill.

What was at first of mortal origin
Came to immortal heritage at length,
Yet was upon the earth allowed to stay;
So is it that the nobler arts begin,
Favor of gracious Muses gives them strength,
And Heaven's indulgence grants us them for aye.

MELPOMENE

SAD was she called—the Muse of lyric verse,
Gifted with song, sweet-voiced Melpomene,
When she was called the chorister to be,
To help the players on the stage rehearse
Woes of the house of Laius even worse
Than was of Priam's house the destiny
When Troy to ruin fell, in misery
Did envious Fate the royal queen submerse.

Ill-fortuned Song that should have led the dance
When were the purple grapes of autumn pressed,
When vintagers kept their high festival;
On sacred days should have gone in advance
Of victims with pure snowy fillets dressed,
To loftier feelings have inspired all!

ATYS

HOW close the kinship of our mortal race
With flowers that blossom in the early spring,
These into life a breath of incense bring
And give a wealth of beauty to the place!
How gladly would we keep their gentle grace—
Charms of the sense that close about them cling,
Delay the season of their withering
And fold them in Affection's fond embrace!

Upon this law does myth of Atys rest;
The great Earth-Mother wished him for her own
While to a human love his heart was true;
His body sleeps upon the Mother's breast,
But from his blood have purple violets grown
With every year to pay Love's vows anew.

NIOBE

O WOMAN, thou of suffering hadst known
More than is given to mortal heart to share,
And heavier woe than human soul could bear,
Wast blessed by favor of the gods alone
In sorrowing to grieve thyself to stone!
O'er this the trickling streams deep furrows wear,
Whose channels show grief immemorial there,
Thus symbolizing stifled sob and groan.

Whether it be that once relenting Fate
In pity of a mother's broken heart
Did grant to her this measure of relief;
Today there stands by the disconsolate
Thy figure made familiar in our art
To show how old is our most recent grief.

PSYCHE

As when do buds upon the orchard trees
  Waken to beauty on the April air
  To find the world about them is how fair,
How sweet the breathing of the April breeze,
How musical the murmuring of bees!
  A flush of gladness mantles branches bare
  As though some consciousness were wakened
    there,
Of new-created sovereign power to please.

So was it Psyche wakened once to find
  The world about her beautiful and bright,
    Welcomed herself so smilingly to earth;
She scarcely dreamed that graces of the mind
  Crown all creative effort with delight—
    All Nature gladdened by that happy birth.

PSYCHE AND PROSERPINA

It is a spacious, dimly-lighted sphere
Without a sun, a moon, or any star
To make distinction between near and far
In space or time—eternity the year—
Two presences upon the way appear,
The one is Ceres' child, Proserpina,
Brought hither once in Pluto's ghostly car
And made the queen of unfleshed spirits here;

The other, Psyche from the world above;
And each to each had these two been well known
When they were playmates, living on the earth;
Now are they drawn together by the love
No less by their long separation grown;
They bless and pity each the other's birth.

PYGMALION

UPON the formless stone Pygmalion wrought
To realize the ideal of his mind,
From day to day strove patiently to find
That excellence of beauty which he sought,
A passing glimpse of which his soul had caught
Upon the background of his faith outlined;
Celestial grace to human love inclined,
But yet beyond the grasp of human thought.

The chisel falls, the sculptor's work is done,
The grace and comeliness of woman stand
Before him—reason reels from love and joy!
Alas, that triumph such as this is won!
Were it not better that the artist hand
Its cunning had forgotten to employ?

ATHENA

FROM brain of Zeus the prudent goddess springs,
Equipped for war and most divinely fair,
Her realm the spacious field of ambient air
Which round the earth in folds transparent clings,
Soft meadow breeze, the fanning of her wings
On which she comes at times of weighty care
To bid the rash adventurer beware,
Or comfort of sustaining courage brings.

What matters it we may not see the maid
As she was seen of old on field of strife,
Feel her restraining as did Thetis' son?
Who goes to shrine of Duty unafraid,
To Wisdom gives full measure of his life,
Enjoys at last the triumph—victory won.

DIONYSUS

WHO was the god of life—those hidden springs
Of vital forces that in Nature dwell—
He was the sovereign lord of death as well,
Destroying utterly that which life brings;
Yet this divinity of mystic things
So widely separate as heaven and hell,
Threw over souls of worshippers a spell
Inspiring what the minstrel artist sings.

So is it that the round of life is made
As in the circle of a choral dance
Around the secret Eleusinian shrine;
The noblest enterprise by man essayed,
His betterment in spirit to advance,
Comes from his feeling life and death divine.

THE CARYATIDES

THEY bear the burden of high pediment,
These marble figures of the woman slave;
Upon their heads the heavy architrave
Rests evermore—the years will not relent;
And yet, as with a gift they had been sent
To sacred shrine, these women duly grave
Now bear themselves in bondage strong and brave,
The step aye steady and the neck unbent.

Ye archetypal women, doomed to bear
All burdens, without murmuring, patiently,
As these are portioned by unfeeling Fate;
Ye have the grace in wretchedness to wear
High look of dauntless courage and to be
Chief ornament of temple and of state.

PAEAN

"SEND healing, O Apollo, on the rays
Of Morning as she climbs far eastern hills!
Send healing of the many grievous ills
Our people suffer these unhappy days!
Send healing, thou, and grateful hands shall raise
An altar to thee, whereon myrrh distils
A fragrance that thy grove and temple fills,
While round the shrine we chant a hymn of praise."

Such was the cry of poor hearts in distress
When Pestilence, unseen in noonday light,
Walked by the side of helot and of king;
The people had their simple faith to bless
Their aching hearts—faith in Apollo's might
And in his readiness relief to bring.

CYDIPPE'S PRAYER

'TWAS Argos' festival, of all the year
The day to Here's worship dedicate,
Then Argive people thronged her temple gate,
Impatient for her priestess to appear;
Her car should have been drawn by sacred steer
With fillets decorated—when too late
Her two sons, running at their swiftest rate,
Triumphantly drew their fond mother here.

When were the sacred rites of worship brought
To close, Cydippe stood in silent prayer
That Here send her sons what gift was best;
Then in the temple's shaded porch she sought
Her tired children—found them sleeping there
Death's dreamless slumber—they were richly blessed.

UP PARNASSUS

BUT little way upon this toilsome road
Our steps have brought us toward our destined goal,
How much is left untraveled of the whole
We planned when first into this path we strode!
Not knowing then how burdensome a load
Of care we took; how heavy was the dole;
Were disappointments to o'erwhelm the soul;
What duties were to ancient usage owed.

Now that we've come to feel our work a task,
To find the path grow steeper day by day,
Aye lengthening with the shadows growing long,
Of our attendant Muse we only ask
She let us halt at times along the way
And cheer us with a soul-inspiring song.

TRAGEDY

HOW have we watched the swift cloud shadows
run,
Light-footed, these bright summer meadows o'er,
As if they fled in merry mood before
The close-pursuing laughter of the sun,
Until at last of shadows there was one
Was heavy with dark threatenings it bore,
With wind, with hail, the deep-voiced thunder's
roar,
And when this had gone by was ruin done.

So on the stage of human life do we
Of Fortune watch the alternate smile and frown,
See either for short victory compete;
And when the sport of cruel Fate is he
Who has put on the long-desired crown,
Then is the work of Ruin most complete.

ENDYMION

STILL sleeps Endymion in the Latmian cave
In all the freshness of his childhood years; —
Age with his wrinkled forehead never nears
The sleeper's couch—nor any watcher save
Silenè, stealing softly o'er the wave,
Comes to that restful chamber—she appears
Night after night, pale from her maiden fears,
Nor has she blushed for that fond kiss she gave.

And still the myth its magic charm retains,
Still does the sleeper keep the bloom of youth,
Now comes Silenè as she came of old.
From Time's remotest infancy Love reigns
Over the planetary orbs, in truth,
More surely yet does Love that dreamer hold.

LETHE

OF all the streams that pour their flood around
The outer borders of the world below,
Cocytus with its burdening of woe,
Scarce-moving Acheron, whose waves resound
With groans of pain, with sobs of grief profound,
And Styx with deadly hate o'erloaded so
Its turbid, sluggish currents hardly flow—
Of all is Lethe with sweet solace crowned.

For Lethe's tide, charged with forgetfulness,
Affords a healing draught to Sorrow's pain,
Brings to the Passions calm relief of sleep;
And there is wherein it has grace to bless
The troubled soul, for in our dreams remain
What memories devoted Love would keep.

NEMESIS

ITS moving shadow keeps at equal pace
Along with substance wheresoe'er this goes,
And where does stationed body find repose
The faithful shadow e'en yet haunts that place;
Day after day across the dial's face
The gnomon traces circling line that shows
How pass the hours to the long day's close,
Its final falling into night's embrace.

Silent as shadows creeping o'er the grass,
Forever hastening toward their destined goal
With steps that never their direction miss,
In comradeship with hours as they pass,
There comes before the shrinking, guilty soul,
Dimly outlined, dread form of Nemesis.

HOMER

FAR off, far off, as in another age
And in another realm of human thought,
Wherein ambitions of today were nought
But dreams unworthy patriot and sage,
We hear a strain of music to engage
Attention of our souls to rapture caught,
While we behold such deeds of valor wrought
As are not shown upon historic page.

O Genius, availing to create
A world in which humanity attains
Its height in virtue as was virtue then;
Where Sorrow ever holds her royal state,
And woman in her loveliness remains
To be forever idolized of men!

SONG OF LINUS

THE genial earth, the fondly fostering rain,
The smiling summer sun—each has its share
In seconding the plowman's prudent care
And bringing to its prime the ripening grain
Until the golden harvest on the plain
Waves to warm winds of August blowing there,
Rising and falling with the rhythmic air
As rise and fall long billows on the main.

And when at length come harvesters to reap,
And women gleaners follow in their wake
To garner all the bounty of the soil,
Then is the Song of Linus raised to keep
The movement steady for the laborers' sake,
To give them pastime and to sweeten toil.

HELEN

HEAVEN with its smiling lends its loveliness
To what of beauty lies about us here;
Beneath that brightness earth and sea appear
Robed in Creation's new-wove bridal dress;
But when the genial light shall cease to bless
With softest radiance what is lying near,
Then will our world—a planet shining clear—
Give back the day through realms are measureless.

So is it with the beauty that once led
White sails of Greece across the Ægean Sea,
Led warrior princes from their homes afar;
E'en to our world is Helen's glory shed
Above the horizon verge of history,
She lingers, smiling, as bright evening star.

ON THE WALL

CLAD in the beauty of a starry night,
Came Helen from the palace to the wall
Where were the Trojan elders seated all,—
Came, to their eyes a vision of delight;
Their hearts were cheered and gladdened by the sight
Of so great loveliness, and yet a pall
Of sorrow did upon their spirits fall
For their dead heroes fallen in the fight.

In such a way as this how often we
Some gleam of beauty wonderful behold
As form of pitying angel bending o'er,
And in the splendor of that vision see
The painfully unhappy story told
Of what had taken place long time before!

ACHILLES AND ATHENA

WITH indignation deep his high soul burned,
Mean taunt of cowardice with scorn he met,
Disdained to notice Agamemnon's threat
Of violence; for safety unconcerned,
He rested calm; but when at length he learned
His chief a greater wrong than any yet
Had planned, his fingers to the hilt were set
In wrath—Athena warned him; quick he turned.

His glance was one of anger, but he knew
The calmness in those steadfast eyes of blue,
In that low voice, by him alone was heard
Of all the encampment on the Phrygian shore,
Back to its scabbard slipped the half-drawn sword,
Lord of himself Achilles was once more.

HECTOR'S PARTING

UNFADING picture, that domestic scene
As the great master painted human life,
Troy's Hector, going into deadly strife,
Outside the Scæan gate turns to his queen,
To sad Andromache—the nurse between
Holds their young babe, proud treasure of the wife,
Hope of the City with forebodings rife,
Recalling, too, the father's noble mien.

There stands that outlined group before our eyes;
What tenderness upon that mother's face,
On Hector's what devotion to the State!
We hear the affrighted infant's feeble cries,
Upon those faces pain of parting trace,—
The picture typifies our human fate.

ODYSSEUS

FAR had he wandered, many cities known,
With men of various moods and morals met,
At Troy had borne ten years of war, and yet
The Fates had singled out this man alone,
With risk and peril his long way had strewn.
Through seas that were with magic islands set
Foregoing song of sirens with regret
At last he was on stranger island thrown.

Strict allegory this of mortal life
That years and years laborious takes us o'er
And leaves us spent upon an alien strand;
After the heavy toiling and the strife
It brings us shipwrecked to an unknown shore
To meet with kindness at an angel's hand.

PENELOPE

PATTERN of faithfulness through weary years
While was her lord engaged in mortal strife
Waged once at Troy for Menelaus' wife,
Doomed cause of countless miseries and tears;
Keeping through longer time of doubts and fears
A heart with love and true devotion rife,
With courage meeting trials of our life,
Most womanly Penelope appears.

Her name wears glory ever since the bard
To whom that clearer vision did belong
Which Heaven in pity to the blind allows,
Gave to her constancy the high reward
Of praises due in his immortal song,
Chanting the virtue of Odysseus' spouse.

OFF SIGEUM

No lines inscribed on monumental stone,
No pyramid upraised by toil of slaves,
No cairn heaped high with pebbles from the waves
Tells with a tone of sadness all its own
Where were the slaughtered heaps of heroes thrown
When Greek and Trojan youth shared common graves,
And earth drank more of blood than desert craves
Of water—victor and vanquished equally unknown.

They need it not—the dead who slumber there
Beside the Ægean sea that evermore
Repeats sad dirges on that lonely strand;
They show on Homer's page how bright and fair
The names of those who perished on that shore;
Their deeds of valor showing yet how grand!

SAPPHO

As music heard across a sylvan lake
Comes with a softened cadence to the ear,
The one who listens there is charmed to hear
How sweet a melody the numbers make;
Upon the stillness of the evening break
The liquid notes—as ripples they appear
On our lone shore, sent from another sphere;
We stop and listen for the singer's sake.

And so it is that now and then a strain
Of Lesbian music comes from out the past
In company with some endearing word,
We find in song repeated once again
After the lapse of centuries—how vast!
Low warbling sweet of Sappho—fondly heard.

KLEÏS

SWEET maiden dowered with a poet's praise,
And by the grace of that fair gift alone
To men of these remoter ages known,—
Known and beloved for what the singer says—
Thou hast thy splendid portion in these days
And in this land far distant from thine own;
Unconscious are we how much time has flown
When now perusing Sappho's softest lays.

No mausoleum mortal hands could build
No epitaph on brazen tablet grand
Could keep the memory of a name so long
As these few lines with tender passion filled
Have by their beauty from the years been saved,
And still are breathing strains of Lesbian song.

A FRAGMENT

HOW has the glory of the weaver's skill
Brought solace often to some aching breast,
To tired hand has offered grateful rest
And soothed an over-troubled soul until
The heart was quiet and the passion still
With vision of a dear one's figure dressed
In fabric fit for entertaining guest,
Or fit for choral dance to pipe and quill.

Such thought comes with a verse remembered long
By which my mother would her toil relieve
Soft singing of the shuttle heard above,
Linked with a strain of Lesbian Sappho's song,
"O mother dear, my web I cannot weave,
My heart is thinking of the youth I love!"

ERINNA

O MORTAL singer by the Muses taught,
Who with them sang unto a world's delight,
How can one, not thus favored, now requite
A debt of grateful homage as he ought?
What offering to thy worship shall be brought
Worthy thy genius? Who shall now indite
Songs that shall fittingly thy charms recite
In measured verse, of strains immortal wrought?

I take not to myself such lofty task,
My hand would venture not to touch the string
That quivers still with thy intense desire;
Only would I of god Apollo ask
That he will from his flaming altar bring
Some spark of Poesy's celestial fire.

ÆSCHYLUS

"ATHENIAN Æschylus, Euphorion's son,
In his last rest doth 'neath this stone abide
'Mid the wheat fields of Gela where he died.
Be witness of his manhood, Marathon!"
Such legend was inscribed upon the stone
That marked the grave of him who glorified
High tragedy with genius denied
To all except Euphorion's child alone.

This record shows that poets even then
With some prophetic sense foresaw the sword
Would win for Valor most enduring bays;
That in the world of action grateful men
Would set bold deed above inspired word,
Give to brave warrior his full meed of praise.

PROMETHEUS

THE mind is prone to send its thought abroad
Upon a far and hopeless quest to find
What still lies hidden in the Sovereign Mind
And in the eternal providence of God;
Thought goes where never yet have angels trod,
Leaves all the present peace and joy behind,
Unto its toil and fruitless task resigned
As is the slave submissive to the rod.

Once only Jove attempted to control,
To curb mankind's insatiable desire
For prying into mysteries profound,
And then it was that the Promethean soul
Showed itself proof against celestial ire
Although the man to Caucasus were bound.

PINDAR

GREAT Soul that didst inspire Hellenic song
Yet lingering on the ever-quivering strings,
That from the past a blended echo brings
Of shouts still urging Hiero's car along
And plaudits of the loud-acclaiming throng;
Thy song, immortal, through the ages rings,
We see the crowd, see Victory fold her wings
And with wild olive crown the athlete strong!

The gods of Hellas are now empty names,
Their sacred temples buried in the dust,
But still wild olive thrives upon her plains;
The fame survives of her Olympic games,
The emblazoned victory is undimmed by rust,
The victors living in thy lofty strains.

AT OLYMPIA

WE see mad horses rushing at full speed
Adown the course; discordant calls we hear
Of wild spectators warning charioteer
That he the pillars at the turning heed;
"Give rein to outer, curb the inner steed,
Nor try to graze firm-planted stone too near!"
Yet others hail with loud applauding cheer
The driver's daring, horses' royal breed.

All this has Pindar shown in glowing lines
That tell of victories more proudly won
Than those rewarded by a kingdom's crown;
Upon his page the name of Hiero shines
As that of winner in the courses run,
Thus gaining an imperishable renown.

SOPHOCLES

UNRIVALLED master of the Athenian stage,
He brought full glory to dramatic art,
He sounded to its depths the human heart,
Set forth its passions on the Attic page;
He traced man's destiny from birth to age,
Looked calmly on life in its every part,
Felt guilt's remorse and knew the bitter smart
Of baffled aims when evil passions rage.

It was the part of an heroic soul
To question sphinx-like mysteries of Fate,
Draw out the monitory truth from these;
The one who saw of human life the whole,—
Its ills how many, sufferings how great,
And gave them living form, was Sophocles.

AT AULIS

THE ships were idle in the sheltered bay,
The men were idle, too, upon the shore,
Impatient for their places at the oar,
From Greece to wind-swept Troy to get away;
The priests declared grim cause of the delay,
Offended gods must be appeased before
The winds would calm, the fleet could sail once more,
A virgin's blood alone Heaven's wrath allay.

The priest for sacrificial victim took
The king's own child—the father turned aside
And drew his mantle close before his face;
He could not bear his daughter's pleading look,
Keen anguish of his soul he could not hide,
Nor bear to give his child the last embrace.

ANTIGONE

DARK night reveals more to our wondering gaze
Than day with all its wealth of light can show;
Across the boundless heavens in order go
Unnumbered worlds upon their several ways,
Not one in all that ordered movement stays
Its measured progress, be it fast or slow,
But keeping in its line of service so
The majesty of sovereign law obeys.

And there are other worlds of ordered plan,
Embracing humble duties manifold
Whose claims upon us are a mystery;
Mild offices of love from man to man,
Firm loyalty to Heaven that we hold,
Shown in fixed purpose of Antigone.

ANTIGONE AT COLONUS

HOW is the beauty of Colonus crowned
By what is told us of that unblessed king
Who came in exile and keen suffering
To this fair spot, who in its quiet found
Favor of Furies, that his woes were drowned,
Release from hated memories that cling
To Thought, unsleeping, that to frenzy sting
His royal soul, his noble spirit wound.

So is it that enchanting spot we see
Within of poesy the tender haze
When tragic fate of Œdipus is told;
And there is seen steadfast Antigone,
As poet pictured her in earlier days,
Bending above her father blind and old.

PHILOCTETES

NATURE, in her maternal sympathies,
Comes to the grieving soul and helps it bear
What weight of sorrows has been made its share
Of freightage over life's tempestuous seas;
She soothes the spirit with her harmonies
Of song that throbs upon the summer air—
She lifted Philoctetes from despair
As told in tragic verse by Sophocles;

For when of loathsome ills the sufferer
Was from his lazaretto isle set free,
He lingered long upon that Lemnian shore;
His soul with deep emotion was astir
When he stood listening to the imprisoning sea
That broke upon the rocks in ceaseless roar.

ELECTRA AT HER FATHER'S TOMB

FORTH from the palace with attendant maid
Electra comes unto her father's grave;
She pours libations generous to crave
The gracious favor of the offended shade;
The thankless gift is on the altar laid,
A prayer is offered that the gods would save
That house from penalty the Fates would have
For murdered lord, for plighted faith betrayed.

Then is perceived upon the altar there
Beside her own a votive gift that shows
'Twas made by one was kindred with the dead;
Two fresh-clipped sunny locks of golden hair,
Fine as her own is, and from this she knows
They are from her beloved brother's head.

EURIPIDES

THE world indulges fondness for the stage,
For comic mask; for tragic sock to show
Mirth of a clown, a sovereign's heavy woe;
A thoughtless Paris, Priam's wretched age,
Sad grief of Hecuba, Medea's rage;
Put light and shade of life in contrast so
That we while viewing them may come to know
What flame of genius lights dramatic page.

Three children of the Muses came of old
On the Athenian stage with themes sublime
And by Apollo's grace with power to please;
The first one hardy theft of fire told,
The next Antigone's praiseworthy crime,
And last came tenderest Euripides.

ORESTES IN SANCTUARY

AT last the long and hot pursuit is o'er,
Orestes clings unto the sacred shrine
Beneath protection of an arm divine;
Around him, sleeping on the temple floor,
Lie Furies tired out—they loudly snore—
Their features threaten him in every line
A vengeance terrible; they give no sign
They will relent their purpose evermore.

Dark picture this of one brought to despair
By crime to which himself was madly driven
Through wickedness was earlier than his own;
We see remorseful spirit sheltered there,
Of matricidal guilt divinely shriven,
And granted peace it never yet had known.

ORESTES AT DELPHI

ABOUT the threshold of the temple door
Keen-scented hounds of hell their vigil keep
Until o'erwearied with their watch they sleep
Stretched in confusion on the marble floor,
And on the stony steps that rise before
The peristyle—their heavy breathing deep
Shows that they rest in readiness to leap
On him who comes protection to implore.

Such are the Furies to the frenzied sight
Of him whose hands are reddened with the blood
Drawn from the breast that in his babyhood
Has been the pillow of his head at night,
The sanctuary of his face from fright,
The source from which he earliest drew his food.

ALCESTIS

HE who would count the value of our years,
How great a boon they are unto the soul,
Must reckon all they bring of joy and dole
And learn to counterbalance hopes and fears;
Must see that smiles are brighter made by tears,
And let the memory of loss console
For whelming waves of loneliness that roll
Between this world and yet more happy spheres.

The story of Alcestis told of yore
By Grecian poet in his moving lines
Presents the worthiness of life in brief,
For Death in sending back the wife once more
Showed how the Infinite to ruth inclines
In giving us the discipline of grief.

MELEAGER

LIGHT-HEARTED singer of an earlier day,
Singing thy songs of mirth and love among
Those who gave music to the Grecian tongue
And breathed their passion in melodious lay,
We listen to thy numbers light and gay,
In which the charms of Zenophil were sung,
To which the fragrance of white lilies clung
And wherein myrtle was entwined with bay.

Perennial is the bloom of sympathy
That makes another's joy and grief our own,
Identifies the present with the past;
So long as we may thoughtful violets see
By Nature's lavish hand profusely sown
So long shall Meleager's memory last.

THEOCRITUS

No sweeter voice is heard than that doth greet
  At earliest dawn the coming of the day,
  When does the veiling of a tender grey
Conceal where gladly night and morning meet;
It is the wood thrush ready to repeat
  A song that in the evening died away
  Into a dream of soft melodious lay
Lulling to rest with numbers faintly sweet.

So is it that from centuries remote,
  From pastured slopes of green Sicilian hills,
    With all the sweetness of that morning bird,
There comes the freshness of a liquid note
  As down a mountainside come laughing rills,
    The singing of Theocritus is heard.

PASTORALS

WHO now will tend the flock? who now will sing
  Within the shade of spreading mulberry trees
  Songs that some neighbor shepherdess may please,
Delight the ears of shepherd lads who bring
Their panting sheep at noon time to cool spring
  Of water—they meanwhile forgetting these,
  Lost to their duty in sweet melodies
Of Pan's composing, shepherd's rendering?

That simple life and taste is not for us,
  Weak slaves of Fashion, servitors to care,
    On Custom's dusty highway driven along;
But, losing ourselves in Theocritus,
  With unschooled Fancy we may wander there
    On cool sequestered paths through Realms of
      Song.

LUCRETIUS

THE Infinite, existing without bound
And having in itself both Time and Space,
Presents nor youth nor age nor any place
Within which may the Infinite be found.
And yet that unsolved mystery to sound
The feeble, childish intellect of our race
Creeps to the verge of knowledge, there to trace
Some limitation the Unknown around.

Lucretius, poet of most curious mind
And of a fearless spirit, undertook
Adventures perilous o'er seas of thought;
Made far excursions, profitless, to find
That for which only unwise mortals look,
Returned unhappy, having found it not.

CATULLUS

ALL day we see the mountain streamlet pour
Its foaming waters over ledges bare,
Nor are we of their music made aware,
The noises round us are so many more;
But when the clamor of the day is o'er,
And hush of evening comes upon the air,
The cadenced lapsing of the waters there
Gives to the solitude imperious roar.

While reading ancient Rome's heroic verse,
We hear the battle cry, the legion's cheers,
Loud clash of weapons, brazen trumpet's call;
But when Catullus' Muse we hear rehearse
Occasion sorrowful of Lesbia's tears,
Then rises music from their rhythmic fall.

VIRGIL

ROME'S laurelled poet, seeking worthy theme
On which to exercise his magic skill,
Chose early years of Latium to fill
With men and deeds heroic that they seem
The fanciful imaginings of a dream;
We hear the cries, the blast of clarion shrill
Proclaiming Roman victory until
Through battle-clouds advancing standards gleam.

Rome's palaces are crumbled now to dust,
Her empire but a memory of the past,
Her legions tented on Time's farther shore;
Her brazen tablets are consumed with rust,
But yet of poesy the glories last,
And Dido's passion burns forevermore.

HORACE

HHE poet to philosophy inclined,
Who sees how great the purpose of our lives,
How mean the ends for which man madly strives,
To all the nobler issues being blind;—
The poet aiming to uplift mankind,
As soon as he at altar step arrives
He kindles what divinity survives,
What fire smoulders in the human mind.

So, Flaccus, thou dost show us how to laugh
Where others make it only ours to weep,
Our hearts with pity yet and sorrow filled;
It is not wine that thou wouldst bid us quaff
From amphorae that have been buried deep,
But rather wine of thought doubly distilled.

LALAGE

COY maiden, laughing from the poet's page
And gaily prattling in the Roman tongue,
A group of mischief-loving maids among,
All ready a keen rivalry to wage,
In merry games of children to engage;
How has the charm of innocence been sung
That you remain the girl forever young
Down to the present time, from age to age!

'Tis of humanity the better part,
Of happy mirth this fresh inheritance
That makes the world again all over new;
That keeps a youthful feeling in the heart,
And as through lengthened centuries we advance
We turn back, Lalage, and laugh with you.

OVID IN EXILE

POOR Roman poet! torn from home and friends,
Unjustly exiled to far Scythian shore
Where gales torment the Euxine evermore,
Where elemental warfare never ends;
How to thy wretchedness stern Nature lends
A sympathy unknown to thee before!
The grieving heavens show pity, bending o'er
Thy sorrow, and the rain with weeping blends.

Thy verse has taught humanity to keep
A tender thought for those who waste their days
In exile, sorrowing for their country's woes;
It paints the desolation wide and deep,
The hunger and fatigue on toilsome ways
To quench life's embers 'mid Siberian snows.

DANTE

BRAVE soul of man to search the dark abyss,
To wander through wide gloomy realms of woe!
And, venturing on untravelled way, to go
At last to undisturbed abode of bliss
That has a yet more spacious heaven than this!
What if that guiding spirit should not know
The devious path to follow up, and so
His final goal should rash adventurer miss?

The soul of Dante proved that it was bold
To make its Heaven-appointed way through life
And into other world its thought to send;
On dangerous path unslackened course to hold
O'er all rough fields of effort and of strife,
And come to Victory's crowning at the end.

BEATRICE

THROUGH life and even longer yet survives
The feeling passionate of human love,
This rules the soul all other force above
And shapes the destiny of mortal lives;
But for that sovereignty Love never strives,
'Tis not for him his right divine to prove,
But rather does it loyal hearts behoove
To greet Love royally when he arrives.

In soul of Dante through long troublous years
Did love for Beatrice hold ample sway
And lead his thoughts to hidden mysteries;
Inferno could not banish with its fears
Nor Purgatory bar him from his way
With her companionship through Paradise.

THE "INFERNO"

GREAT Singer of a greater world than ours,
Of regions never reached by any sail,
Of land unvisited by ocean gale,
By cloud that round the lonely island lowers
And freshens summer meadows with its showers,
You sing a sunless realm of morning pale,
Of evening twilight when the senses fail,
And vision rests with supernatural powers.

You had companion on your journey there,
One who had gone the dismal way before
With fate-announcing Sibyl by his side;
Now, since your visit, all who have a care
The underworld of horror to explore
Have taken your "Inferno" for their guide.

THE NEW LIFE

"LOVE, reasoning of my Lady in my mind
With constant pleasure, oft of her will say
Things over which the intellect may stray,
His words make music of so sweet a kind
My Soul hears with delight, is glad to find
Her sister Spirit worshipped in such way
As Love himself can his devotion pay
In words of praise with charm of song combined."

So Dante said when at the Banquet, crowned,
He poured the wine of philosophic thought
Reality of his New Life to prove;
In that discussion of his past he found
Whatever overturns the years had brought
Renewal of his life was all from Love.

PETRARCH

HE lived an exile from the morning land
Of woman's love, though he gave all his own
Fond adoration to one heart alone
That banished him as to an alien strand;
There, in obedience to Love's command,
He made his unrequited passion known
To hill and valley, echoing woods and stone,
And traced his lady's name upon the sand.

From that lone life of heavy solitude,
From out the fullness of his aching heart,
Amid the tumult of a rising storm,
With charm of song did Petrarch calm his mood,
He gave his tender longing unto Art
And left the world the sonnet's perfect form.

MICHAEL ANGELO

FEW things, well done and meriting the praise
Of excellence, of newness in design,
Whose form is perfect, workmanship is fine—
These serve our admiration warm to raise.
It may be that the hand of genius plays
On organ keys a symphony divine,
Or lifelike statue seems disposed to twine
For artist brow wreath of unfading bays.

To Michael Angelo the gift was given
To meditate upon angelic grace
And show his bold conceptions unto men;
Aspiring thought he lifted up to Heaven
By chiseled truth, by magic skill to trace
Beauty of soul with facile brush and pen.

TASSO'S PRISON

FERRARA'S dungeon of unpitying stone,
Dark, damp, cold cell of close confinement where
For seven long weary years the spirit fair
Of Tasso had been buried, that had known
His heavy grief, had echoed to his groan,
Been witness to what wrongs he suffered there,
Shut from the sunlight, from the open air,
Left to companionship of woe alone;—

Ferrara's dungeon tells more mournful tale,
More pitiful than any artist's skill,
Or most impassionate lines of poet can;
And yet it shows how mortal powers avail
To bear up against wrongs designed to kill,
Endure man's inhumanity to man.

CIRIACO DI ANCONA

"I GO," the Italian antiquary said
When he went wandering through the land alone
In search of bronze inscribed or sculptured stone,
What record there—"I go to wake the dead."
But though his way among the sleeping led,—
Among gray tombs with mosses overgrown
And ruined walls of temples overthrown,
He roused from slumber living souls instead.

The coming of Greek letters and Greek art
Was as the breaking of day's genial light
O'er eastern hills upon a summer's morn;
With ravishment their beauty touched the heart,
Men lost themselves in wonder at the sight,
To truth and freedom was the world reborn.

CONSTANTINE

WHEN was a token given to Constantine
Of Heaven's approval in the stubborn fight
That he was waging in behalf of right,
For human law and for a faith divine,
Among the faithful stars that nightly shine
Appeared the holy cross unto his sight,
Thereon he read the legend flaming bright,
"The victory shalt thou win beneath this sign."

Eternal are the bounds of right and wrong,
Unchanging as the stars' appointed course,
To be inviolate by you and me;
When we maintain them with a courage strong
E'en to resort unto an armèd force,
For us beneath that sign is victory.

CAMOENS

WHO sang the Tagus with its gentle flow
Through meadows blossoming on either side,
His destiny it was to wander wide
And mortal life's vicissitudes to know,
For Camoens gave himself to Fortune so
That he was made the plaything of the tide
Yet he with courage and with skill defied
The Indian wave to whelm his work below.

One hand to swim and one the Lusiad
To hold aloft above the billow's strife,—
Heroics he would not to ruin yield;
Such were the fateful risks the poet had,
He said, regarding his eventful life,
"One hand the sword, one hand the pen did wield."

EL CID

As flies the eagle straight toward the sun,
Or as a white moth hovers round a light,
So men as well are lured by the sight
Of valiant deed on field of battle done
Where, in defence of right, is glory won,
Whither does Fancy often take her flight
To watch the heroes of the past in fight
On plain of Troy, on hill-slopes of Leon.

Long as Romance shall gild her Gothic page
With stories of bold Christian knights of Spain,
Shall tell what feats of chivalry they did,
So long their wreaths of laurel cannot age,
Corroding rust of centuries shall prove vain
To dim th' unblazoned glory of the Cid.

LADY ANNE MACHAM

A LONELY island in an ocean wide
Lies far remote from England's merrie land,
There sparkling waters lap the golden sand,
And wooded mountain shows a verdurous side.
Hither a lover brought his English bride;
Here was a home for these two fond ones planned,
From this retreat were care and trouble banned,
And yet "of thought," 'tis said, "the lady died."

Ah me! how often do we go apart
From walks of common life, avoiding care,
Unconscious of the burden that is brought
Along the way as treasure of the heart
Only to be more fondly cherished there
Until, as she of old, we die "of thought."

THE MINNESINGER

LIGHT-HEARTED Singer, singing on your way
The slender burden of an idle song
As centuries ago you strolled along
Incurving shores of some Venetian bay!
How glad if only we could hear today
In solitude, apart from noisy throng
Of those who would with their indifference wrong
Your gentle art—could hear an old-time lay!

Of praise would Truth and Honor have their meed,
And Love would have his sovereignty made known,
Then Life would have companionship of Mirth.
Life of itself would be a joy indeed,
And we should realize what charm had flown,
What worthiness had vanished from the earth.

GUNLAD'S MEAD

THE mead that is by Gunlad guarded well
And is reserved for Odin's honored guest,
Is of all beverages esteemed the best
That's quaffed by blest divinities who dwell
Within Valhalla's sacred courts—who tell
In song the ancient glory and the zest
With which Valkyrie make their searching quest
For those who, fiercely fighting, nobly fell.

This is the magic mead that ever gives
To *skald* the sweetness of triumphal song,
And gives yet ampler vision to his soul;
Inspires the bold, exalted strain that lives
In Scandinavian minstrelsy so long;—
High Gothic thought inscribed on runic scroll.

THE SKALD

HE was no singer of an idle lay
To please the fancy of a lovelorn maid,
Nor yet has Muse of Scania essayed
To soothe berserker rage amid the fray,
Nor ever sought uplifted hand to stay
Dire work of carnage with the bloody blade,
But rather urged the warriors, unafraid,
Through broken hostile ranks to hew their way.

Only heroic deeds on battlefield
Amid the din of war, the clash of arms,
Received the tribute of the singer's breath;
Accompanied by ringing swords and shields,
He glorified in song Valhalla's charms
Until the soldier fell in love with Death.

FOUNT OF URD

THE Muses drank sweet waters, crystal clear,
That flowed down from the bright Castilian spring
When they in friendly unison would sing
Full glories of the genial Grecian year,
Repeating to Apollo's grateful ear
The simple harmonies that ever ring
In Nature's low, sweet, tender carolling
Of life and love and heartfelt worship here.

But Bragi quaffed those sacred waters cold
That bubbled sparkling from deep fount of Urd,
From underneath the roots of ash tree old
Whence was the inspired voice of Mimer heard,
And to the world such wondrous things he told
As are not found in rune nor written word.

IDUNA'S RUNES

THREE magic runes Iduna gives to those
  Who celebrate her praise from year to year,
  From age to age go on repeating here
What pæan through Valhalla ever goes
When Valor overcomes all Scania's foes,
  When Peace and Liberty at length appear—
  Three runes unto the skald's perception clear,
But whose significance none other knows.

One tells of honest truth the priceless worth,
  Beyond all opulence of Ind to prove;
One tells the beauty of this lower earth,
  And beauty of the heavenly worlds above;
The third, of human goodness that has birth
  And genial nurture in warm heart of Love.

MIMIR'S WELL

CHILD of the melting glacier and snow
With which are Scandinavia's ridges crowned
The rugged mountain giants clustered round
Deep vale of Scania—peaks that catch the glow
Of Midnight Sun, and signal those below
That in the courses of the sun is found
Of summer's lengthening days the farthest bound,—
Child of the glacier, musically flow!

Known to an earlier age as Mimir's Well,
Still by thy borders do white birches grow,
But not as once with runes cut deep and fair;
And yet the trees have mysteries to tell,
Truths that our age is not allowed to know,
Yet we in spirit fondly worship there.

FRITHIOF'S SAGA

SWEET fragrance of the birch woods on the breeze
Comes down the slopes of Scania's rounded hills
In company with laughter-loving rills
That with the whispering pines make melodies
Haunting the shadowy spaces 'neath the trees;
The low sad music of their cadence fills
The soul with thoughts of distant days—it thrills
The feeling heart with wakened memories.

The softly plaintive voices of the pines,
Inspired with prescience of the storm, repeat
Prophetic strains as oracles of old;
In measured movement of the poet's lines
Are felt of loving hearts the rhythmic beat,
The one love saga of the North is told.

GOETHE

THE shifting scenes upon his mimic stage
Bring us the heights of heaven, the depths of hell,
Abode of angels, den where devils dwell,
Where mercy soothes us and where passions rage;
There we behold man's enemy engage
To ruin man; we hear the tempter tell
The market price at which a soul will sell,
And read its paltriness on Goethe's page.

We turn from that to smiling summer fields,
We listen to sweet singing of a bird
And in the grass cull one blue violet;
The breath of morning only sweetness yields,
In sparrow's song full note of joy is heard;
We try sad fate of Faustus to forget.

FAUST

THE race of man, devoid of reverence
For things are sacred—for divinity,
Has always over-curious been to see
What lies beyond its little sphere of sense;
In its presumption 'twould inquire whence
Its limitation that it cannot be
Lord of itself and hold the mastery
Over the ordering of life's events.

So is it in his Faust has Goethe shown
This folly and this madness of mankind,
The wish all mystery of life to know;
To have creative power all its own,
And in the exercise of this to find
Man is himself humanity's dread foe.

SCHILLER

FATE strove with Nature, trying hard to make
A soldier of one whom the Muses chose
To be their servant—he to duty rose
As one who gave his service for their sake.
It was for Schiller Custom's rule to break,
Heed higher call, desert the ranks of those
Who were enlisted against foreign foes,
From its long sleep the larger world to wake.

He painted tyranny as none before
Had dared to draw it with a hand so free,
He showed how thrones in wrath of Heaven fell;
To what high patriotic zeal could soar
Affirmed heroic Maid of Doremy,
And emphasized intrepid soul of Tell.

HEINE

CHILD of a captive and an outcast race,
A people from their holy temples torn,
Subjected to the world's contempt and scorn
But finding in Jehovah's plenteous grace
Strength to endure man's ostracism base,
To a condition wretched and forlorn,
Gifted with genius was Heine born
Unto a lowly lot, most commonplace.

His was the unregarded task to bear
Burden of want, of misery and pain,
Neglect of friends, of enemies the hate;
Through long, long years of wretchedness to wear
The mocking mask of mirth, good cheer to feign,
Approve himself superior to Fate.

LA FONTAINE

WITH hearty laughter or with mild disdain
To note the foibles of the human race,
To chide its follies with most gentle grace,
And make the weakness of its nature plain
By having beasts in courts of reason reign,
The height of pride's absurdity to trace
Through donkey's voice behind the lion's face—
This was the genial task of La Fontaine.

Were we to search the parallel to find
To this engaging fabulist of yore,
His analogue would come on ready wing,
Our year-round redbreast promptly come to mind;
The deeper snow the nearer to our door,
The heavier rain more blithely would he sing.

CHATEAUBRIAND

A WIND–SWEPT headland on St. Malo's shore,
Washed by the driving storm, the driven spray,
And crowned by that lone lookout of Grand Bé,
Around whose foot strong tidal currents pour,
Drown the wild sea-bird's cry with angry roar,—
There was most fitting place whereon to lay
In final rest loved singer of his day
Whose death must France, must all the world deplore.

Who wakens pity in the human breast
And teaches hearts to feel another's woe,
He does mankind a service far beyond
Toil in the field. He shows us what is best,
Most profitable for the heart to know,—
Such was the work Heaven gave Chateaubriand.

BERANGER

No cricket ever sang more blithely gay
Into late hours of a summer's night,
No early-waking lark e'er met the light
Of summer morning with a roundelay
More joyous, more light-hearted in its way,
Poured from a heart transported at the sight
Of god Apollo climbing up the height
Than was the cheerful song of Beranger.

He touched the chords of pity with a deft
And gentle hand, was most compassionate
Of hearts o'erburdened with a nation's pain;
He saw the heart of France with sorrow cleft,
Her fields a waste, her hearthstones desolate,
And yet he sang to her a merry strain.

VICTOR HUGO

He lived a stranger in a foreign land;
  He mourned, as Ovid mourned, the unfeeling fate
  That sent him there—the scorning of the State
That banished him beyond her sea-worn strand.
Sad in his island home by breezes fanned
  That came to him across the imprisoning strait
  And brought sweet scent of lilies to his gate,
For France and Liberty he nobly planned.

Now is the ignoble power at an end,
  And he who drove the poet over sea
    Is for his last misfortune chiefly known;
To Hugo years the greater glory lend,
  The World, declaring his supremacy,
    Calls him to larger than imperial throne.

HEREDIA

WITHIN a world that has been made so fair,
Its lands and seas alike pavilioned by
A borderless, blue, star-bespangled sky,
Few are they seeing any beauty there,
But let the artist choose a landscape bare,
Rock-strewn, wind-swept, and to his canvas try
To give what moods and features charm his eye,
The beauty of that picture men declare.

The ancient world of feeling and of thought,
What joys and sorrows earlier men had known
Were by more recent passions shaded o'er;
These lone, bleak wastes were by Heredia sought,
He made their wide, deserted tracts his own,
The glory of their greatness to restore.

CARMEN SYLVA

THOU favored child of Fortune, thou hast worn
With queenly grace what crown a queen may wear;
What heavy burdens are for those to bear
With uncomplaining patience hast thou borne;
Thine oath of coronation that was sworn
In faithfulness, has been observed with care,
And thy heart's pity given everywhere
When have thy loyal sons been called to mourn.

And yet, and yet—thy gracious heart hath known
More troubles than a stranger would divine
Could round the station of a sovereign cling;
Thy griefs and sorrows then become our own
When taken down for us "from Memory's Shrine";
Thine is what solace sympathy may bring.

TARA

A LONE low hill upon an empty plain,
By ruined walls and ditches fenced around,
Has stood through ages as memorial mound
To those who fighting for their land were slain;
The spot was sacred under Druid reign,
Its summit by the hall of Cormac crowned
As Erin's noble capital renowned
'Neath curse of bell and book long time has lain.

Since Diarmid's day lies Tara in the dust,
All echoes of her song have died away,
Has vanished every token of her art;
But still the memory of her heroes must
Survive and flourish to the latest day,
Enshrined within the faithful Irish heart.

STONEHENGE

FAR out on unfrequented moor they rise,
Huge stones were never wrought by hammer stroke
But taken, just as titan forces broke
Rough granite ledge, in blocks of massive size;
The druids ranged these pillars circle wise;
A roofless temple wherein heart of oak
Should on the sacred altar duly smoke
With savor of appointed sacrifice.

The fires burned out, the altars now are cold,
Hushed are the voice of priest, the victims' groans,
The place is silent as abode of Death;
But yet, the mystery of that work is told
In mute disclosure of these upraised stones;—
These were the lower steps to higher faith.

THE ROUND TABLE

FAIN would the world again see Arthur's court
In all the splendor of its pageantry,
Enchantments of its fair surroundings see,
The beauty of its dames—beyond report,
The flower of knighthood, met in manly sport,
Upholding the renown of chivalry,
And that Round Table with its galaxy
Embracing spirits of the nobler sort.

Shall we who lead of manhood hold today,
Who strive a higher level yet to gain,
And in a clearer atmosphere to live;
Shall we our standard higher set than they,
More strong defense of righteousness maintain
And to the world a grander vision give?

PASSING OF ARTHUR

FROM the great deep he went to the great deep;
It was not birth, it was not death that gave
The limits to that course from wave to wave,
That splendid pageantry of mighty sweep
As magic dreams afford us in our sleep.
The spirit of our age was strong and brave
That put this in a poet's care to save
And, in "the Idylls of the King" to keep.

We, too, have seen that pageantry sweep by
From out dim mystery to yet more dim
As one might watch a vessel from the shore.
Our hearts—they follow after with a sigh,
Our eyes with tears of exaltation swim
And of regret the vision is no more.

EXCALIBUR

IT was a woman's arm, a woman's hand,
Robed in a samite sleeve all spotless white,
That clove the water's surface flashing bright,
Upraising thus a finely tempered brand;
It was a woman's voice that gave command
To him who took this weapon, as her knight,
That it be not unsheathed save for the right
And in defence of Briton's ancient land.

This was the magic sword, Excalibur,
Which all but Arthur tried, and tried in vain,
To wield; it made him victor of the foe.
When, at his death, he sent it back to her
Who had bestowed it, that same hand again
Was reached to take it to the depths below.

IN AVALON

BENEATH bright glamor of departed days,
From our near present separated wide,
When man was valiant, woman glorified
With beauty that inspired the minstrel's lays,
And bravery had its ample meed of praise;
Then honor was to valor close allied,
Fond smile of beauty was the champion's pride,
Fair lady's glove more prized than Roman bays.

Man strove for honor then more than for gain,
And woman homage claimed with lover's vow,
Thus happily through life they journeyed on.
They lived their lives upon a higher plane
Than is to be attained by any now
Dwelling the while in vale of Avalon.

CHAUCER

FATHER of English verse, most genial guide
To us who would as devotees today
Join cavalcade upon the Pilgrim Way,
And to A'Becket's shrine with pilgrims ride,
Beside the Wife of Bath or by the side
Of Reve upon his horse "all pomelee grey,"
And hear the Miller tell his story gay,
The young Squire gowned "with sleevës long and wide";

With you we set out from the Tabard Inn,
And on the road we listen to the "Tales"
Were told by worthy travelers of yore;
From where those tales with Prologue fair begin
We read and read to where the singing fails,
"For sorrie herte I may not tellen more."

CANTERBURY PILGRIMAGE

FROM over spacious field of Chaucer's page
Breathes tender freshness of that April day
When, starting off as palmers on their way,
The devotees began their pilgrimage;
There went the flower of youth, ripeness of age,
The Prioress sedate, the Squire as gay
As woodland singer in the month of May,
Ready with banter and with persiflage.

We see them journeying on, a merry crowd,
We hear the jingling of their bridle reins,
Soft laugh of merriment, low quips of fun;
The tale is told with plaudits ringing loud,
With each successive age new favor gains;—
That pilgrimage is never to be done.

SPENSER

THERE was in England an heroic age
When England gloried in a virgin Queen,
Men of most noble ancestry were seen
Eager on perilous daring to engage
And war for larger conquests yet to wage;
Sailing the farthest north and south between,
They made these lonely shores of ours the scene
Of actions memorable—our heritage.

But there was one, the poet and the seer,
Who vied with bold explorer on the sea,
Calm and serene as pilot at the helm;
He looked out on the world with vision clear,
Discovered nobler lists for Chivalry
And for his fancy found a Faërie Realm.

THE FAËRIE QUEEN

A FABLED border-land lies in between
  This world material on which we dwell,
  Whose make and history we know so well,
And that unknown world which is only seen
By eye of Faith—that border lies serene,
  Haunted on every hill, in every dell
  By sprites of whom our folklore stories tell,—
Devoted servitors unto their Queen.

Wrapped in the soft enchantment of that land,
  Its empty glamour and its magic charm,
    By Spenser led, we ramble on and on
Until we are beset on either hand
  By strange illusions—then a quick alarm
    Awakens reason, and the spell is gone.

WOODS OF ARDEN

YE Woods of Arden, 'neath whose leafy shades
Soft, moss-grown paths go many devious ways,
With sinuous windings weave a mystic maze
By streamlets leading down to grassy glades;
They seem the paths whereon Pierian maids
Have wandered by themselves in earlier days,
Enraptured by some love-inspired lays
Or by a lover's moonlight serenades.

We follow on your footpaths unaware
At every turn the gifted seer would find
Faint glimpse just passing of a vanished god;
Yet our dull natures meet a Presence there—
A mystery, until there comes to mind
Before us on your mosses Shakespeare trod!

SHAKESPEARE

No marble frieze adorned with sculptured fame
Brilliant as human fancy can devise,
No walls of polished stone shall ever rise
Of Poesy the greatness to proclaim;
Nor can the builder's genius ever frame
A vaulted temple roof below the skies
That shall within its spheral arch comprise
Aught of the spaciousness of Shakespeare's name.

This fills the world with a most glorious light
That streams undimmed across the ages past
Nor suffers it eclipse in passage long;
It shines upon our shores as warmly bright
As on the Mother Land, and to the last
It shall shine on in poet's praise of Song.

HAMLET

"WHETHER 'tis nobler?" ah, the doubt and fear
That in the hesitation are expressed!
The unsolved mystery is never guessed
By any spirit while sojourning here;
And shall it hope to find in larger sphere
From dire perplexity its final rest,
Achieve at last the noblest and the best,
No worthier wreath of victory appear?

Alike mysterious are life and death,
As little known is Hamlet as the ghost,
The man in this no wiser is than boy;
Discussing destiny, we waste our breath;
Who is content with least, he has the most;
Of earth or heaven, we own what we enjoy.

BEN JONSON

A RUGGED rock, storm-beaten through the years,
Boldly confronts a rough and billowy sea
That gnaws away its base unceasingly,
Shows not of sea nor conflict any fears,
But, 'mid wild rage of elements, appears
Calm and unmoved—content itself to be
Grim warden of the foreshore's destiny;
Against the storm its mighty form uprears.

Not otherwise, confronting human life,
And looking off across long ages past
Did rare old Ben survey the stormy scene;
He saw the warring passions all at strife,
Saw tyranny and freedom grappled fast,
Defeat and triumph—all that lies between.

MILTON

WHAT have you, Time, most precious in your
care
Kept as an heirloom to a later age,
Or shown with pride upon the storied page,
Inscribed in letters of the brightest there,
Making of poets' lives a record fair
That should approval of the World engage,
Should be received as noblest heritage
By all that love the Muses everywhere?

And Time makes answer to this questioning;
"The fame of those you ask for does not rest
More than the shaping of their lives with me;
I simply take what names the centuries bring,
And such as are found worthiest and best
Are handed over to Eternity."

PARADISE LOST

WHEN would men build a fane Olympian
That for its full perfection should be known,
They cut to its just scale each quarried stone
And worked on to the end as they began;
They understood that in these works of man
In which his workmanship is to be shown
All rests upon the fair design alone,
On following out a well-conceivèd plan.

So Milton—though to him was light denied—
Engaged upon the theme that was his choice,
Unto the end held to his purpose high;
That mighty task of his he glorified,
In its accomplishment could well rejoice,
Since it was done 'neath his Taskmaster's eye.

LOSS OF EDEN

PATHETIC theme of misery and woe,
Sad story of a weak and hapless pair
Into whose hands was given the tender care
Of Eden's innocence; their task to sow
The seeds of flowers, watch the young plants grow
Up to maturity of blossoming fair;
These fostering keepers wholly unaware
Of Evil plotting Virtue's overthrow.

Such was the theme of Milton's happy choice,
Well suited to the habit of his thought
Nor less apt to the genius of his pen;
He listened to the Archangel's mighty voice
Commanding him to write as he was taught,
"And justify the ways of God to men."

GOLDSMITH

WHO sang of "Home, sweet Home," the pain had known
Of separation from his place of birth,
Of nature's ties of kinship learned the worth,
In thronged assemblies felt himself alone;
He sang his heart's desire in plaintive tone,
And that one song of his goes round the earth,
Meets warmest welcoming at every hearth
That waits, and waits some wanderer of its own.

"The Traveler" tuned Goldsmith's tender heart,
Was prelude to that fonder, tenderer line,
"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain";
He mourned its fate, unconscious of his art,
In words that move your sympathies and mine,
Sung most melodiously in minor strain.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET Auburn, made immortal by the pen
Of Goldsmith, who had known it when a boy,
The humble rural hamlet of Lissoy,
Where had his father labored among men,
The "village preacher," where the boy played when
School was exchanged for freedom, books for toy,
Tasks for the sportive game and gloom for joy,
It was the "loveliest village" to him then.

Today we see it pictured by the sun,
With shrubbery its gardens overgrown,
And water stealing silent past the mill;
Although a hundred years and more have run
No careful hand replaces fallen stone;
Lissoy remains "deserted village" still.

BURNS

HE had the human heart, the human soul,
He met the frown of Fortune with a smile,
Singing his song of courage to beguile
That hard, rough road that led him toward his goal;
He strove with wayward passion for control,
And if he failed of mastery the while
His armor took on polish from the file,
Yet was Burns to be victor on the whole.

Not all his strength was given to his day,
Nor spent upon Mossgiel's ungrateful soil,
His genius burned a more enduring flame;
The songs he sang go ringing on for aye,
Long will the daisy bless the plowman's toil,
And honest labor share poetic fame.

SCOTT

IT called for deftness of the master hand,
For lightest touch of genius to bring
To our dull ears the many tales that cling
To brae and burn along the Borderland
Where side by side now Gael and Saxon stand,
In arts of peace each other rivalling,
But where for centuries in the past did ring
Sharp twang of bow, loud clash of tenpered brand.

That patriot task was taken up by Scott,
He gave to it the ardor of his life,
Toiled to achievement through fatigue and pain;
Alike for Saxon and for Gael he wrought,
Gave praise to what was noble in the strife,
Cheers to the victor host, tears to the slain.

LADY OF THE LAKE

WE watch her pushing off the island strand,
With skill of boatman plying dripping oar,
She rounds the point, and, looking toward the shore,
Sees hound and huntsman on the curving sand,
Expectant of an answering "halloo," stand
And listen to the baying dogs' deep roar;
Silent the maiden stays her boat before
The Highland hunter, waiting his command.

How has the magic of the poet's pen
Brought from the past fine grace of chivalry
And shown it mirrored in the lonely lake!
Here Beauty waits on Courtesy, as when
Knight-errant entered in the lists to try
His lance's temper for his lady's sake.

WORDSWORTH

IT is as if, 'neath an October sky,
Out on the open hills where north winds blow,
And overlooking valleys far below,
With one familiar, fond companion, I
Were strolling leisurely, enchanted by
Rare beauty of the scene, by converse low
Of him who at my side was pacing slow
Paths leading us to levels yet more high.

I breathe, it seems to me, more spacious air,
Drink clearer fountain than I yet have known,
Am brought to selfhood and to nature near;
And then it is that I become aware
That on poetic page these scenes are shown—
It is the voice of Wordsworth that I hear.

COLERIDGE

BE it the gift of Fortune or of Grace,
The sweetly-granted favor of the Muse,
No mortal may Heaven's offering refuse,
Nor may neglect his talent sole to place
In circulation—bid it speed apace
And gain another talent by its use;
For negligence the gods take no excuse
Nor their indulgence grant in any case.

The splendid talents given to Coleridge's care
Should have been husbanded and laid out well,
Not folded in a napkin to be dimmed;
They would have brightened more from constant use
Than even as they show in Christabel,
Or when the glories of Mont Blanc are hymned.

CHRISTABEL

THE poet in a poet's way would show
What power has purity of maiden's love,
True spirit of devotion from above,
Base wiles of sorcery to overthrow,
And, by its fervent wishes, breathèd low
In prayer to Love Divine, avail to move
Heaven's pity, and to heart of mortal prove
Resistless force of passion's steady flow.

The fancied chamber of her peaceful sleep
Is faithful copy of the maiden's heart—
A sanctuary this, a hermit's cell—
Wherein does Love his holy vigil keep,
Guard with fidelity and subtle art
The purè, unsullied dream of Christabel.

TENNYSON

ONE day—alas, it was a lonesome day!
The sky was covered with a heavy cloud,
The murky fog and mist hung as a shroud
Above unsmiling waters of the bay,
Long time the barque with somber canvas lay
Inside the bar—a shallop narrow-prowed,
Biding her time until she were allowed
With a propitious wind to sail away.

It came as if Arion's deathless song
Had thrilled immensity to regions far,
Or as triumphal note of dying swan.
Enchanted by the strains, men listened long
To hear the singer's "Crossing of the Bar";
The World wept silence—Tennyson was gone.

PALACE OF ART

HIS spacious palace high and stately rose
To Fancy's vision at the poet's will,
In every part of it the highest skill
Of master-builder full perfection shows;
And he who passes through its portals knows
What works of genius its galleries fill;
From broidered arras what brave gentry still
Looks calmly on the present as it goes.

Here will we enter in and rest the while
The outer world in lap of winter lies,
And starry flakes come slowly drifting down;
From glowing canvas here fair women smile,
Up from the buried past its heroes rise,
Yet living in imperishable renown.

BYRON

ROUND peaks close hooded with eternal snow
Dark storm clouds linger on from day to day,
Nor are these from their mooring torn away
By any force of uncurbed gales that blow;
They feed through all the year cool streams that flow
O'er broken ledges, slopes of granite gray,
Down into meadow lands with summer gay,
They give glad greenness to fair plains below.

The genius of Byron, wild and strong,
Dwelt by itself, from other lives apart,
He walked far heights of minstrelsy alone;
Some cadences of that inspiring song
Fall into rhythm with the beating heart
And waken feeling kindred to its own.

PRISONER OF CHILLON

THE dungeon's damp, the dungeon's heavy air,
Unvisited by any light of day
Unless a beam at noontide, far astray,
Through the barred slit in stone had stolen there;
The dungeon floor and walls of all things bare
That could a sense of humane care convey,
From manhood's prime till he was hoary gray,
All this 'twas lot of Bonnivard to share.

Bold record of the luckless prisoner's fate
Is traced at length of his confining chain
By circling groove worn in the floor of stone;
Nor less enduring living words relate
The slow-paced years of hunger, cold and pain,
Revealed in Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon."

SHELLEY

THE sea gull plying up and down the shore,
At one time sweeping low, then circling high
As if the wary fishes to descry,
The deeps and shallows of the sea explore,
On an unwearied wing does upward soar
Until itself is lost in azure sky,
A dim spot vanishing from straining eye
Of watcher waiting its return once more.

The genius of Shelley in its flight
Came now and then to our earth very near,
Coursing along the common ways of men;
Again it soared into celestial light,
Became a brilliant planet shining clear,
Then dimly vanished far from mortal ken.

ADONAIS

LASTING memorial was the tribute paid
By Shelley to his brother poet, Keats,
Sad lines in which his mourning Muse repeats
Outbursts of grief for flowers that early fade,
For music silenced in the myrtle shade,
Silenced in death—the heart no longer beats,
The lips are mute, from tongue no more flow sweets
Of minstrelsy—such strains as Orpheus played.

Short time Keats waited unfulfilled renown
Of which he wrote in a despairing line,
Lamenting work would never come to end,
While even then had Fame devised a crown
Of ivy that with laurel should entwine,—
Had given it to the hand of grieving friend.

KEATS

As in a meadow where the growing grass
Falls to the mower's scythe before its time,
And with the grass a lily in its prime
Bows to the steady rhythmic strokes that pass,
So was cut short the poet's life, alas!
Before his genius gained the strength to climb
Heights of poetic visioning sublime
That levels loftiest Himalayan mass.

But as the fragrance of the lily lives,
And with the fading of the petals' glow
A sweeter breath is from its calyx shed,
So to our later time Keats' music gives
A melody his own day did not know;
The song is praised now that the singer's dead.

HOOD

AT times are we surprised to find how near
In consciousness does pleasure rest with pain,
As sunshine mingles with the summer rain
So will a smile light up a falling tear;
Amid our fondest fancies will appear
Thoughts of a joy that cannot come again;
Our merry songs end with a sad refrain,
With quivering lip we speak a word of cheer.

How near of kin are wretchedness and mirth!
That while the voice is laboring with one
The other burdens us with different mood;
So grief and laughter had their common birth
In songs of toil and want until the pun
Became the blazon of our brotherhood.

SONG OF THE SHIRT

IT is not for bewitching melody,
For rhythmic flow of smoothly running verse
That we read Hood; his laughing lines rehearse
Of hopeless toiling lives the misery.
Beneath that mask of mirth and jollity
Do we behold Creation's primal curse
By man's insatiate greed of gold made worse
Than ever was designed that it should be.

The poet, in his own case, sadly knew
How chilly cold are penury and want,
And how the slights and frowns of Fortune hurt;
He from his lifelong hard experience drew
Sad pictures of distress and pain that haunt
His weirdly plaintive, human "Song o' the Shirt."

BRYANT

THE summer bird, on its returning flight
Through space illimitable, makes alone
Its long, unresting way from zone to zone,
Nor is there risk of error day or night.
We cannot know if it be led by sight,
Or it be guided by some skill unknown,
Some other sense to which the way is shown;
We only know it shapes its course aright.

The youth who watched the wild fowl disappear
In growing dimness of the evening sky,
And in reflective thought yet followed long,
He kept in mind that vision many a year,
A steady flight to lay his own course by
As he sought far-off heights in Land of Song.

"A FOREST HYMN"

WHO in the earlier practice of his art
  Sang of the voices in which Nature tells
  The mystery of life and death that dwells
In wood and field from common thought apart,
Of voices speaking only to the heart
  As on the lonely shore do empty shells
  Repeat and magnify in vaulted cells
Music that wakens Fancy with a start;

He later sang for us "a Forest Hymn"
  Revealing hidden influence that lurks
    In growing things and unto beauty strives;
He bade us meditate in woodland dim,
  And to the beautiful order of God's works
    Learn to conform the order of our lives.

EMERSON

IT was a happy destiny that gave
  Into a puritanic fostering care
  The nurture of a genius so rare
As that of Emerson, so strong and brave
The oppressor to denounce, to shield the slave;
  Foremost with intrepidity to dare
  His testimony against wrong declare,
And 'midst the tumult his composure save.

That soul, so fortunate in time and place,
  Found study of life's use its duty here,
    And what it learned unto its fellows taught;
Lent to its lessons a yet added grace,
  The Delphic utterance of poetic seer,
    Showed loftier truths to our serener thought.

POE

HE had a happy heart when he was young,
And every day he had a song to sing
Merry as song of blackbirds on the wing,
No notes but those of gladness in it rung
But there were moody silences among
The rich outpourings of that joyous spring,
And fancies frightful with their threatening
A shadow over all his future flung.

His was the gift that Heaven hates to bestow
On any untried soul that comes to birth,
Doomed to a hard and cramped existence here;
The gift of genius well designed to show
The ecstasy of human joy on earth
To grief and melancholy is how near!

WHITTIER

THE quaker mode of speech, the quaker dress
Befitted well the man of sober thought,
And well became the message which he brought;
Strong word of cheer the laborer's toil to bless,
Soft word of comfort for a heart's distress,
Words all with wisdom of experience fraught,
And such as, into lines poetic wrought,
Flow ever on in perfect peacefulness.

The Quaker Poet holds high place among
Those who have striven a cheerful song to raise
Where is so often heard sharp cry of pain;
In shop and mill, on farm and road are sung
His songs of labor and his hymns of praise
That potent were to break the bondman's chain.

SNOW-BOUND

A LONE New England farmhouse old and brown,
Nearby, a barn stands weatherworn and gray,
These look upon a rarely trodden way
The long slope of the hillside winding down;
To this place seldom from the busy town
Come steps of idle saunterer astray—
Less frequent come when Winter, as today,
Puts on his ermine robe and regal crown.

Such as this bleak and bare midwinter scene
Has Whittier's memory from his childhood brought
With vivid fancies richly broidered round;
It is a sleeping world, calm and serene,
A world of purest alabaster wrought,
Given in his winter idyl of "Snow-Bound."

LONGFELLOW

WE linger long upon the sunset hill
To watch the splendor of the passing day,
Watch spectral gathering of gloom and gray
That all the lowlands with a mystery fill;
Our senses with a glad emotion thrill
While that fair vision slowly melts away,
And yet the longer, longer do we stay
To hear the wood-thrush in the evening still.

So do we linger o'er the splendid page
Of English song that masters melody
And charms the thoughtful hour with delight;
Its beauty and its grace our hearts engage
Until, enraptured into ecstasy,
We hear Longfellow's "Voices of the Night."

AD MAGISTREM

POET divine, how often in thy song
We hear the cadence of some silvery note
That falls as softly as if from the throat
Of woodland warbler singing all day long
In summer time; upon our vision throng
Thought visitors from time and place remote,
Fair dreams that over sunset waters float
Displaying hopes that make our being strong.

Whether it be steadfast Evangeline
Or Pilgrim maiden doth inspire thy lays,
In every song such cadences will fall
As blend the music of the birds with thine;
Yet of earth's choir worshipping with praise
Wast thou the sweetest singer of them all.

HIAWATHA

HE was the hope of an heroic race
To be the Indian warrior brave and strong,
A chief for whom his tribe had waited long,
Their leader both in war and in the chase,
One who to victory a path would trace
Blazing in glory; would avenge a wrong,
Achieve an exploit to be told in song,
And by his conduct lend theirs finer grace.

He came among his people as a child
Of noble nature though of humble birth,
With all the gifts of generous manhood blessed;
He was for them too temperate and mild,
Nor did they recognize their prince's worth
Till he had sailed away into the west.

PRISCILLA

A GENTLE spirit used to gentle ways,
Reared in the fear of God nor other fear,
With humble duties and with happy cheer
Filling long hours of her laborious days,
And all those busy hours giving praise
That Paradise about her lies so near,
Home and its fond affections are so dear,
So strong the faith her youthful spirit stays.

Fair land of promise was the wilderness
To her who felt the Lord's upholding hand,
Read words prophetic on the sacred page;
Her life was given succeeding lives to bless,
A fondly cherished memory of our land—
Glory unmatched of our heroic age.

AT THE HALTING–PLACE

FAR have we traced from its cool, snow-fed springs
High up on broken slopes of Castaly,
The never silent stream of poesy
That from the borderland of winter brings
Refreshing coolness and a charm that clings
Forever to remote antiquity,
That with our rhythmic thought makes melody,
And on its course continually sings.

Here halt we for a little rest the while
Are April's violets blossoming in the grass,
And watch the current as it sweeps along;
We cannot realize how many a mile
The wave has come, how many it must pass
In traversing the spacious Realms of Song.

AD LECTOREM

NOW have we come—with Fancy long astray—
Down wooded slopes of high Parnassan hills
Whereon the dew of early morn distils
Its rainbow-tinted drops for foot of fay
To set a-tinkling; for us all the way
Has been a murmuring of running rills,
A musically lapsing sound that fills
With melody song meadows of today.

Now is it time that we consider well
What truth and beauty on the way appeared,
What good was gathered as we came along;
And in our humble verses try to tell
What strains of poesy our spirits cheered
As we strolled idly down through Realms of Song.

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